

はぐれ勇者の鬼畜美学

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上栖綴人

イラスト
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はぐれ勇者の 鬼畜美学Ⅴ

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「だからなつてやるよ……お前を倒せる俺に」

「舐めてるのはどっちだ……そんな丸腰で、俺とやるつもりか？」
「仕方ねえだろ……任せられちまったんだからよ」



Prologue - Everyone's goal we hope

Part 1

Blowing sand and dust was flying outside the window.

The sand obscured the view, which signified the start of the storm.

The strong winds rattled the window, yet inside the room there wasn't the slightest amount of noise.

Disdiya's Imperial palace stood in the heart of a desert. The palace's main body was specially designed to not be affected by sandstorms. Without the slightest gap between the external and internal walls of the city, even the faintest noise from the outside was almost completely cut off.

As a result, anyone in the Imperial palace couldn't hear the roaring in the village.

"- Father, what is meaning of this!"

Disdiya's IV Prince Alphonse was enraged.

Right now he was in the Emperor's throne room. Alphonse was questioning the person sitting on the throne.

Baram Dy Alon Disdiya

But

"....."

Baram not only remained silent, but he didn't even look at Alphonse.

So Alphonse spoke again with a clear tone expressing his dissatisfaction.

"Why ... Why would you ignore the resolution, and aim to attack the Wandering forest!"

After the fight between Akatsuki, Listy and the others ended, Alphonse was dispatched to investigate the nation's border. En route he learned about Galevain formally declaring war on Disdiya.

The cause of the declaration of war was Disdiya's unauthorized invasion of the Wandering forest, a clear a hostile action.

After receiving the report, Alphonse almost suspected it was false. Sherfied held a meeting with the four-nations, although it wasn't an official conference it at least was an international meeting involving the leaders of the four countries.

The meeting concluded with an agreement between the leaders of the four countries -- Its binding nature was on an international level.

Furthermore, Akatsuki had demonstrated his strength and received international public opinion support.

In accordance with the conference agreement, Alayzard would re-investigate the attack against the surveillance force by Galevain, expanding the investigation in order to uncover the actual facts and make them public. However, Disdiya disregarded the agreement made by the four countries, and at this point in time was on track to attack the demons. This undoubtedly will attract criticism from international public opinion, and bring about domestic people's doubts and worry. Although the majority of people hate or even fear Demons they still hoped a devastating war between the two could be avoided.

The biggest problem, however, lied in the fact that they were launching an attack on the eve of the re-investigation into the events which Galevain was initially blamed for.

Attacking at this sensitive point in time will inevitably lead the people to think Disdiya was trying to destroy evidence, and the attack against surveillance force by Galevain was actually Disdiya's doing.

However Alphonse did not believe that, he believed Disdiya was innocent.

The results his investigations along the border seemed to indicate his opinion was correct.

However..... who issued the investigation order.....

Alphonse silently gazed at his father, Baram.

He wanted Baram to personally confirm it.

"A few people..... believe that the attack on the surveillance forces was in fact carried out by our country's military -- In order to stimulate the weapons and ammunition trade by directing this farce."

Alphonse tone was full of doubt, and he hoped his father will deny it.

"Father the attack on the surveillance forces wasn't done by your orders, right?"

"..... No."

Baram shook his head, meaning that he had nothing to do with it.

However this wasn't the answer Alphonse wanted. Baram's eyes were still staring at the void, trying his best to avoid making eye contact with

Alphonse. Such a perfunctory reply didn't satisfy Alphonse, instead made him doubt Baram in his heart.

"Why must we invade the Wandering forest!? Sherfied and Aleclasta and our country have a military alliance, so long as our country sends a request both countries will not sit by and do nothing. However, if this aggressive action was initiated by our country alone, our country would shoulder the responsibility of the war alone. Not to mention the agreement was made by the four countries, Galevain along with the human world -- In other words, Alayzard's peace agreement will be torn up with any military action, and will force our country to face condemnation from around the world. Your Father should understand that!"

Compared to the very impassioned Alphonse, Baram's response was very cold.

"..... The world's condemnation."

Until now, Baram looked straight ahead, but now he took a look at Alphonse.

"-- It seems you don't know anything."

"Of course I know very well. Father's decision was a big mistake!"

After a bitter retort, Alphonse turned around at once, and was about to leave the throne room.

Then Baram's voice came from behind.

"Where are you going?"

"Sherfied. I can order our military to cease their fire, but this may not be enough to appease Galevain and Akatsuki-dono. Queen Listy can stop Akatsuki-dono because of their personal friendship. There is no other person who can avert this war."

"So seems there is no other choice."

Baram's voice trailed off, the doors to the throne room were abruptly opened.

Several soldiers filed in from the door.

They were the Royal Knights -- Baram's personal guards.

Alphonse found himself immediately surrounded.

"..... Father, what does this mean?"

"It means what you think it means."

Baram said,

"This is the point of no return, your actions will only prevent our country and our people from justice. From now on, you are no longer the director state affairs for Disdiya. I must detain you until I remove the order."

"Nonsense Isn't the fall of countries because of unrighteousness men, right Father?"

Alphonse tried to approach Baram, but unfortunately he could not do so.

A Royal knight stood in the middle of the two, the rest of the knights have stepped forward to subdue Alphonse. Baram, gazed quietly at the scene, and coldly ordered:

"Away."

"This is wrong Father, please reconsider!"

Several Knight's were dragging Alphonse out of the throne room, Alphonse still wouldn't not give up as he turned around --

And shouted towards the doors that were slowly closing:

"You can turn back now. It's not too late I beg you, Father!"

However, Alphonse's cries of grief did not reach Baram's ears.

After a loud noise, the thick doors closed completely.

Part 2

"It's not too late?"

After the throne room calmed down, Baram had muttered.

At the same time, in his heart he thought over Alphonse's advice.

However, Baram still believed he made the right decision.

"It was too late now..... and there was no turning back."

After a short pause --

"Whether it is for ourselves..... or for all of Alayzard."

Part 3

A strong shock-wave swept across the battlefield.

Total annihilation, an unrivaled shock-wave emanated from Akatsuki's Demon Sword.

He focused on a full critical attack, the shock-wave radiated out in every direction leveling Disdiya's vanguard army situated above the surrounding plains of the "Wandering forest".

Despite the devastation, the Disdiya army wasn't thinking about withdrawal.

"Do not be afraid! Swordsman squadron 2, attack! Tank unit, launch --!"

At the forefront of the division a young commander gave the orders, and then suddenly bursts of gunshots rang out on the battlefield.

Disdiya's prided tank unit, which looked like armored beasts, one after another issued a terrifying ROAR.

But --

"This is just child's play against me!"

Facing the high-speed artillery shells, Akatsuki screamed.

Akatsuki could have sidestepped or used his demon sword to cut the shells in half, that much wasn't a problem for him.

However, Ousawa Akatsuki actually abandoned those options.

His Ki passed through his feet, and building up "Renkan Keikikou" he spun his sword at a high-speed circular orbit striking the shells, redirecting them back into the sky. The shells then rained down right in front of the swordsman squadron intending to join in on the assault. The bursting shells caused the earth to shake, and sent sand flying up to the sky obscuring the battlefield.

But Disdiya's soldiers break through the smoke and dust, and bravely continued the assault.

But --

"No, he disappeared? How is it possible!"

"He didn't escape, right?"

Disdiya's soldiers fell into confusion.

Akatsuki sat and waited, as he overlook the soldiers.

"Do I look like a coward who would run away to you?"

"Th-there above us!"

One of the soldiers noticed Akatsuki, but unfortunately he was a step too late.

Jumping in the air Akatsuki easily crossed over the front line, approaching the commander.

Seeing this, the members of long bow squadron immediately lifted their bows. While the swordsman squadron predicted the trajectory of Akatsuki's descent, and readied their attack the moment he landed.

However, Akatsuki was unperturbed. He stretched out his left hand and aimed at the feet of soldiers. Then suddenly a huge ball of light came out from Akatsuki's left hand -- he utilized "Renkan Keikikou" to refined the "Ki" within his body with the surrounding atmosphere to create an "energy bomb". BANG! It was aimed well below Akatsuki's position, and the power indirectly hit dozens of soldiers within Disdiya army, suddenly sending them flying.

Allowing Akatsuki to cleanly descend to the now unoccupied ground.

However, Ousawa Akatsuki didn't land, but rose slightly.

"Urrrrroooooooooohhhhhhh!"

Using the momentum from the fall he stabbed the black <Demon sword> into the ground.

The <Demon sword>'s blade was already filled with Akatsuki's "Ki".

The moment the sword stuck the earth a shock wave engulfed the whole area, as if a large explosion occurred.

After a short while the impulsion calm down, and the sand cloud gradually cleared up to reveal --

Only a single person standing in the heart of the explosion, unfazed by the impact.

It was just him alone Ousawa Akatsuki.

"H...how is this possible?"

After witnessing Akatsuki's astonishing power, the dazed young commander almost couldn't believe his own eyes.

When the explosion occurred he immediately created a wall with earth magic, barely escaping.

Although he escape from any physical injury, mentally he suffered a heavy blow. He commanded more than 10,000 soldiers and all were defeated as if a mountain collapsed on them. Even the bombardment of the Tank Squadron was unable to defeat Akatsuki. It was certainly understandable for him to be terrified to his core.

"Why..... How can one man have this much power. This is....."

"-- Why you say?"

The commander muttered to himself. Akatsuki glared at him from the corner of his eye, and clenched his teeth and shouted loudly:

"Don't you even realize at this point -- It's over for you!"

Akatsuki dashed out.

Surrounded by an innumerable amount of soldiers, the commander was panicking and struggling to keep it together.

Ousawa Akatsuki couldn't help but recall of a time when he was trying to attain a higher level of strength, and when he asked the same question about power before to someone.

It was about five years ago, around the time when he was first summoned to Alayzard.

He was being protect by Sherfied, and living in Erdia castle as a guest.

After receiving swordsmanship training in the palace courtyard. Akatsuki asked a similar question to Sherfied's -- No, Alayzard's proud "Hero."

Leon · Esuperio.

Part 4

"-- Why am I so strong?"

Esuperio Rushao Leon asked, Akatsuki just nods as to say "Uh huh."

Compared to the out of breath Akatsuki, Leon's composed appearance highlighted even more the power gap between the two.

"You seem to be stronger now then you were before, right?"

"Umm, I guess..... but I really didn't think too much about it."

Leon smiled awkwardly, but Akatsuki was unlikely to give up that easy.

"Then think about it now -- Why are you so strong?"

For about a month now, Akatsuki had been receiving sword training from Leon and Zechs.

After one month of rigorous training he finally managed to grasp the basics of swordsmanship, but it was clear to Akatsuki that even if he continued to train it will be impossible for his sword skills to attain equal footing with

Leon and Zechs. General sword training will only increase your general strength. It was insufficient to proceed towards the strongest realm.

In fact, Ousawa Akatsuki's idea was not to become the strongest swordsman, he only wanted obtain enough power to stop his father and brother. The fact was Akatsuki's father and brother were two of the most powerful people in his world.

So I must surpass the realm of the strongest

Akatsuki's expression was serious, Leon suddenly somewhat understood.

"Maybe it is..... anger and despair.....?"

While hanging his head Leon muttered, his easy-going face was covered with a layer of haze.

"My father and sister died at the hands of Demons You might of known that, right?"

"Umm, that was also the reason that you, a commoner, aspired to become a knight."

Leon performed very well on the battlefield and acquired countless achievements, thus obtaining the title of a "knight". Leon's strength was unquestionable, and in Sherfied and throughout Alayzard he was accepted by all the people as a Hero. Everybody thinks that he was the only candidate able to defeat Demon King Galious.

"Is that all... ..? That was the reason you are so strong?"

Leon's answer was apparently not enough to convince Akatsuki.

The pain of losing a loved one really might be able to be converted into a powerful motive to improve oneself, but that did not mean you would be able to ascend to the realm of the strongest. This was Akatsuki's own personal experience, he had suffered even more pain.

Leon wasn't the only one who experienced the loss of a loved one..... Akatsuki lost his little sister. In Alayzard there wasn't a lack of residents who lost one of their friends or a family member, and didn't feel the same pain and grief.

That being the case, then what was the difference between Leon and other people?

"..... The weight must be different..... right?"

Due to Leon's unusually calm tone, Akatsuki couldn't help but look up.

Only to see Leon with a wry smile, as if he saw through Akatsuki's inner doubts.

"If my strength really surpasses others, that must mean my inner pain and grief is greater than others the difference then is home."

Leon's answer left Akatsuki speechless and also surprised. There weren't any rebuttal expressions in the world, whatsoever. This was made painfully clear as he hid behind a wry smile.

Ousawa Akatsuki couldn't help thinking: If that was the case, then what you say to yourself must also drive you to grow stronger as fast as possible.

Otherwise, if Akatsuki's determination was inferior to his father or brother's, that would lead to Akatsuki's strength being much lower than the two of theirs. On the other hand, Akatsuki didn't think that desperation alone was sufficient.

.... Not only do you have ability, you have the faith not to back down.

-- Am I right?

Enough desperation that made it hard to breathe and could overwhelm a person's heart -- Akatsuki had similar experiences.

And there was another. His beloved wife was a demon who died by human hands, which in turn angered him enough to abandon the human race and become a Demon King. Perhaps his heart was the same, also dominated by despair and sadness.

"I say Leon, Eh!"

Akatsuki stared directly at the Hero, as he slowly started to talk,

"Peace between humans and demons..... is it really that far fetched of a dream?"

In order to stop an unreasonable opponent by force your power must be greater than theirs to compel them.

Thus the present Akatsuki was unable to stop his father or brother.

However Leon was different, in that his strength wasn't less than the Demon King's.

The war between humans and Demons was virtually the same, except for minor racial difference.

Leon was the hope of mankind, Galious was the King of the Demons, those two were the same in that they each lost a loved one. If those two leaders

could find a way to compromise, then perhaps they can succeed in stopping this senseless war.

However, Leon slowly shook his head.

"Unlikely, after all the two sides have shed too much blood. And if I let off the murderer who killed my father and sister, I certainly can not forgive myself."

The reason is very simple.

"I've already been to both of their graves, as well as in front of mother, and pledged that I would defeat the Demons."

"But they are also desperate and just trying to survive. If it is as you say, and desire gives birth to strength, then isn't this war just two sides of a desperate race? Really is there no other solution?"

Leon showed a faint smile, his expression is very calm.

"Akatsuki, you really are kind, it's no wonder the princess has a crush on you."

Akatsuki hearing those words couldn't help but awkwardly scratch the back of his head.

"The princess is good to me, but it's only because I come from a different world, and that is relatively rare that's all."

"No such thing, you have a particular charm about you that wins the favor of others. Zechs and Loutier became good friends with you so quickly, and you even became popular with the maids in the city."

"It happened, right? It seems that I am actually hated by Listy..... "

"Can it be that you're thinking too much of it?"

"Otherwise, why didn't anyone believe me? I still got into so much trouble."

Akatsuki looked helplessly.

"I obviously apologized for that so many times."

"Haha..... her first impression of you really was the worst."

Leon laughed.

"Who told you that she was in the bath when I suddenly dropped from the sky?"

"The summoning time and place is not up to me, yet I got blamed."

Akatsuki answered roughly.

"One second I was just about to lie down on my bed, and the next I suddenly appeared in a different world in a huge luxurious bathroom with my whole body pressing down on top of the Princess's body You absolutely are incapable of understanding how I felt."

The biggest problem was that both of us were without a stitch of clothing, which further increased our embarrassment. Akatsuki completely didn't know how to explain the awkward situation. As a result he was considered a suspicious person, so Listy loudly screamed and sent several magic attacks his way as he tried to escape in a panic. However when the maids heard the commotion they came running and Valkyria abruptly hit him on the head, knocking him out cold on the spot. Once he opened his eyes again, he was surprised to find himself actually imprisoned in a dark Dungeon for not just one day but two. Finally, it was found out that this was a big misunderstanding, clearing Akatsuki of any wrongdoing.

"Listy by nature is conservative and usually changes clothes alone with no maids present in order to not show off her bare body..... so her fright at that time, of course, is predictable."

Leon smiled and continued.

"She's never been seen naked before by a man, and that was probably the first time she ever saw a naked man too."

"Therefore I apologized to her."

"Actually I don't blame you. After all the summoning of a person from a different world is the desire of the world, and isn't something that can be controlled."

Just as Leon finished, the clock tower bell rang out.

"-- Oh, Akatsuki, I have to go."

"Ah you have to go help your mother open shop?"

Leon's mother Selina managed the "Wildcat Pavilion" restaurant in town. Even though he was a "Hero" now, Leon was still set on going to the restaurant to lend a hand.

"Can't do anything about it, because it's only me..... and mom left."

Everyone in the city knows Leon valued his time with his mother Selina above all else. Therefore no one bothered Leon while he enjoyed his mother and son time.

Naturally Akatsuki was the same, so he quietly watched as Leon left.

Then Leon abruptly stopped and looked back at Akatsuki.

It seemed that he suddenly remembered something.

"Don't worry too much Akatsuki. Even without the gift of magic like Zechs, you can become an excellent swordsman, and you will get stronger than you are now."

"How can you be so sure?"

Akatsuki frowned skeptically at Leon's argument, but Leon understood and smiled.

"Certainly, because you are actually somewhat similar to me."

Part 5

-- Ousawa Akatsuki's consciousness returned to the present.

The battlefield was riddled with smoke, not a trace of the enemy troops remained.

Akatsuki alone repelled Disdiya's tens of thousands of troops.

If he immediately chased after them he could completely wipe out the enemy, however Akatsuki didn't intended on do that.

He decided to let the surviving soldiers take their wounded comrades, and clear out.

"Well... .. It's about time to return."

Akatsuki put the <demon sword> on his shoulder. Miu and the others were in Forestnium waiting for Akatsuki to return. Although they come to trust in Akatsuki's strength, however because the delay they will undoubtedly be a little worried.

Thus Ousawa Akatsuki turned around to take measure of the battlefield and the path that lay before him.

""

The impact of the battle turned the wilderness into a mess. Debris littered the ground with broken swords, armor, big iron tanks, and blood was smeared on Disdiya's flag.

The present scene was a relating of what had previously occurred here, an earthshaking war.

This war was provoked by none other than himself, however Ousawa Akatsuki had no regrets. The moment the four-party talks ended, and everyone returned to Forestnium no other options existed. No matter what

Miu, Chikage, Kuzuha even Haruka and Kaidou supported Akatsuki's decision. Therefore Akatsuki became the newly-appointed Demon King, and officially declared war against Disdiya.

"..... True peace."

Akatsuki muttered.

Before now, he had no idea how many people attempted to bring true peace to Alayzard, fought blood-soaked battles, but no one had succeeded in achieving that dream. Those people also included the Hero Leon and the Demon King Galious.

The "Rogue Hero" Akatsuki and Listy fought bravely, but in the end it was still a failure.

However Ousawa Akatsuki decided he will never abandon his oath, and pledged to overcome that cruel fate.

Therefore, he cannot be defeated at any cost, because if history proved anything.

-- Even if the Demon King was defeated afterwards was still the same, peace may not arrive in this world.

Since ancient times stories have been handed down, foretelling of the Demon King's death as the symbol that marks the end of suffering and the arrival of happiness.

People around the world would rejoiced at the upcoming peace with smiles on their faces.

However that big happy ending was actually camera selectivity, actuality was built on the premise above.

While the ending credits of that movie rolls of the screen, the leading male and female are smiling and holding up their hands together, gazing at the sky --

However for leading actor and actress in the real world, the fact was when the flames of war ceased there were a thousands and one things to do in the extremely broken world left behind.

The satire was everyone deliberately ignored the facts before their eyes, and became intoxicated with the idea that defeating the Demon King meant victory.

Joyful tears would blurred out their field of vision, brushing aside this frame from the movie to never be seen.

Consequently Akatsuki gazed at the scene before him.

Images from video games didn't do justice to the real situation.

Ousawa Akatsuki's present picture will be firmly engraved in his heart.

After overthrowing the Demon King, mankind will only get a false HAPPY
END.

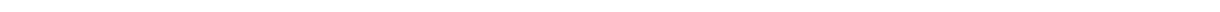


はぐれ勇者の 鬼畜美学Ⅴ

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I cannot give up here.

Because for me -- there are still many things left to do.



Chapter 1 – Within the Unavoidable Fate

Part 1

The forest seemed to be crying.

There was no wind, but yet the leaves still swayed as if in sorrow.

Hearing a far off commotion Akatsuki promptly returned to Forestnium.

What received Akatsuki was an eerie silence, as if Disdia's attack had never happened. Then within the demon race, it was not calm, the air was filled with a tight atmosphere, representing that this tiny village had already become prepared for war.

"....."

Just as he passed the entrance into the village Akatsuki was stopped suddenly by two familiar faces.

Izumi Chikage and Nanase Haruka -- They were responsible for protecting their companions.

"——Akatsuki, you've returned."

Chikage, who took the lead to speak, had a very calm tone. Akatsuki nodded in response and said,

"I forced the incoming soldiers to retreat. There should be no immediate threats..... How are things on your side?"

"We haven't even spotted so much as an enemy shadow, but we're still on high alert."

Chikage casually shrugged, on the other hand, Haruka lowered her head to look at her feet.

"The Concept Magic Barrier has been thoroughly reinforced, the enemy should not be able to easily enter."

The three of them suddenly became speechless.

The reason why Akatsuki declared war on Disdia was because he suspected the movement of the armor knights, because he suspected they were dispatched by Disdia to attack Forestnium.

With the presence of Kaidou and the other members of Akatsuki's group from the other world, they were able to keep the damage done substantially lower than if the villagers had been without their presence. Which was an

accomplishment in of it's own. But in their eyes it had not been enough. They had not done enough. And that was why so many lay injured while only seeking shelter from the battle, just like young Riruru.

Urumu was the leader of the village, who had unfortunately lost his life in the enemy's attack. He died at the hands of the golden knight, who was by far and wide the most powerful of all the 20 or so invaders.

As the village leader Urumu was the one to maintain the barrier of Forestnium. Who knows how the enemy found out this information, but it was apparent that the golden knight came charging for Urumu.

Although meeting a strong enemy, due to Urumu's sacrifice, among this attack, he was the only one that died. Urumu had set a magic within his body, the magic's activation condition was his own death.

The moment Urumu died at the hands of the enemy, the magic within his body instantly activated, and transferred the invaders to outside of the village, at the same time, it enhanced the Concept Magic Barrier, to completely prevent foreign enemies from entering. Since the golden knight and the other Disdia soldiers were all sent to a distant location, it ended that day's tragedy.

Half a day later, Akatsuki and the others returned from Sherfield.

"Time really flies, 20 days had already passed instantly."

This also represents that Akatsuki, under Miu's support, had become the demon race's representative, it had already been 10 days since he had formally declared war on Disdia. These 10 days, Akatsuki had only constantly repelled the invading army of Disdia and did not attack Disdia's territory. There was obviously a reason for him to utilize such passive tactics.

To blindly defeat Baram while angered; it will not achieve the outcome that Akatsuki desired.

.....However, it was almost time.

These 10 days, Disdia had launched a total of 4 attacks, and each time, it was repelled by Akatsuki. As the amount of failures increased, the number of people trying to invade also gradually increased, today, they had even sent an army with tens of thousands of people. Just by looking at the situation, the next attack could possibly evolve into a large-scale conflict.

Presumably they next time the troops are sent out, it was the decisive moment using all their strength.

“——Is there any news that came from Melissa?”

Akatsuki suddenly mentioned the leader of the brothel guild. Before formally declaring the war, Akatsuki had privately asked “her” to find out information about various countries if it was possible, and regularly compile a written report once it was complete.

“There is.” Haruka nodded, and replied to Akatsuki’s inquiry.

“After this military action failed, Disdia had already officially requested help, they wanted Sherfield and Aleclasta, based on their military alliance, to send troops to battle, but since Sherfield and Disdia both had their surveillance forces attacked, it is difficult for them to refuse Disdia’s request.”

“Stalling until now before they were forced into joining the war, the fellow is already amazing.”

Akatsuki narrowed his eyes, and tried to figure out Listy’s situation.

While before, during the four countries’ meeting period had reached the conclusion of a duel, Listy was already in a dilemma.

So Akatsuki, after a fierce battle, had voluntarily resigned, and used a deep kiss to end the duel, and had also allowed Listy to save some face. However, Baram overthrew the decision of the four country’s talks, and decided to launch attacks by himself, which had suddenly caused all the hard work Akatsuki had done go down the drain.

Thus, Akatsuki had no other choice, and could only go down the remaining path in front of his eyes. Galevain was a demon race’s country, if he had sought help from Listy, it would undoubtedly trap Sherfield for injustice; However, if the situation had turned into a war between Galevain and Disdia, due to the constraints of the military alliance, Sherfield will have to send troops as support, at that time, Akatsuki and Listy will be forced to fight each other on the battle field.

So if we had to express Galevain’s stance, currently it was a pressing matter.

Galevain’s only enemy is Disdia, and there was no intention to turn the other 2 countries into enemies ——Under these circumstances, it was likely that the immediate situation will become a joint force of Disdia and Sherfield together resisting Galevain, it was important to indicate this stance. If they do not make any representations, and fought Sherfield and Disdia without care, the meaning of this entire body was completely off. Whether was it for Listy or for Sherfield, this option will cause the least harm to them.

Thus Akatsuki inquired Haruka about this key information.

“Meaning that Meliisa had already understood the inside of “that matter”?”

“Yes, almost all of it.”

Haruka answered.

“Disdia’s fourth prince Alphonse, due to taking an opposed stance to this attack, had been arrested. He should currently be under house arrest.”

“I see, then there is nothing to worry about.”

Alphonse, who was a military-level that specialized in strategy, was already gone, the chances of Galevain winning the war naturally increased dramatically.

Aside from winning the victory in front of their eyes, it also includes diplomatic conciliation after the war.

Thus, Ousawa Akatsuki formally issued commands to Chikage and Haruka.

“Based on the information provided by Melissa, the next battle would probably the main forces from both sides, at that time, I hope that you two will also participate.”

“No problem, I have already been prepared.”

Chikage nodded, her attitude was very firm.

The two of them had already overcome the unstable state caused by the dimensional transfer, and successfully linked back the consciousness channel for magic. In short, Chikage and Haruka had already recovered their original fighting strength.

“I don’t have any opinion.”

Haruka continued to speak.

“Ignoring the result of the duel that was decided in the meeting between the four countries, Disdia’s attack should be punished.”

“I’m grateful. However, I would still like to remind the two of you, don’t try to force yourself.”

Akatsuki’s tone was very serious. Chikage and Haruka nodded, and their eyes revealed a firm gaze.

Looks like the two of them know the seriousness of the situation, there should not let their emotions affect them.

“How is the other people’s situation?”

“Miu is currently speaking with the young people inside the village.”

Haruka answered.

“They still refuse to admit that you are the demon race’s representative, Miu is currently trying to promote you, hoping that they will reconsider.”

That can’t be helped.

“After all, the moment the peace agreement had collapsed, you were no longer an agent for the demon race. And now you suddenly claim that you are the demon race’s representative, it's no wonder that there will be rejections from numerous demons... Even if this was Miu’s decision, the situation is still the same.”

“I see.....But that matter, only that fellow can manage and deal with it.”

Akatsuki replied.

The youths of the demon race do not trust Akatsuki, just because Akatsuki is a human.

If Akatsuki had directly conversed with the youths of the demon race, there will be a larger rejection effect.

Thus, this situation can only be given to Miu to manage.

“As for Kaidou, he seemed to be happily taking care of the children inside the village.”

Haruka continued to speak:

“Many children are very close to him, with his care, it had undoubtedly helped many mothers inside the village a big favor. And since there is still fear within everybody’s hearts about the attack before, Kaidou Motoharu’s liveliness will undoubtedly help a lot to lead the children out of this fear.”

“Is it.....Can’t believe there is a situation that he would also be useful.”

“Yes, I was also taken aback.”

“The two of you really have cruel mouths.”

Listening to the comments of Akatsuki and Haruka to Kaidou, Chikage could not help but show a wry smile.

“.....As for class rep.....”

Chikage lowered the volume, with an hesitant expression.

“She is still waiting at the side of Riruru, and whatever we say, she is still refusing to leave.”

Part 2

The huge room was not empty, yet it was still enveloped in a breathtaking silence.

Being surrounded by the heavy atmosphere was Sherfield Kingdom's Queen Listy's office.

The magnificent office desk was positioned next to the window side.

Listy was sitting on the chair and carefully read the letter that was sent by Disdia.

On the other side of the desk, two loyal comrades that have fought together with her through life and death, Zechs Doltrake and Loutier Trum, who surpassed the relationship of Queen and Vassal, was standing there.

Until after Listy had finished reading the letter, then Loutier broke the silence.

"Listy.....What did Emperor Baram say?"

"Almost the same as what I imagined. Based on the agreement of the Military Alliance, please send troops as soon as possible, and fight together with Disdia against Galevain....."

"About the actions of Disdia's forces invading the forest, how did Baram explain?"

Zechs interfered. The most difficult situation currently was that Disdia had ignored the conclusion decided in the four country's meeting, and sent out troops to attack Galevain. In the past, Sherfield had repeatedly refused the demands of fighting together with Disdia, all in order to clarify the true intent of Baram.

Thus, Listy read out the contents of the letter that Disdia replied with:

"——This time, the conflict that erupted between the demon race, the reason was because the surveillance forces had mistakenly entered the village of the demon race, as a result, they were under attack by the demon race, and was helplessly forced into taking actions to fight back."

Listy read up to her, then angrily turned the letter into a paper ball.

"This battle that was suddenly started had cause damage to both sides, at the same time, it led to Galevain declaring war, I, as a representative of Disdia, can only express by regret.....!"

Then, she threw the letter with Baram's signature aside.

"That muscle-idiot, actually wanted to rationalize this act of aggression?"

Zechs's surprise further aroused the flame of anger inside Listy.

"Outrageous.....It is too much!"

"Since things have developed to this point, aside from rationalizing Disdia's actions, Emperor Baram had no other path to take.

Loutier concluded.

"Denying the legitimacy of Akatsuki declaring war, would be the only reasonable excuse for Disdia to take military action, at the same time, it can create an image of them being the victim to win the world's sympathy."

"Furthermore, they could accuse Sherfield and Aleclesta, who have the an alliance relationship, by saying that the two countries are reluctant to send troops to assistance Disdia on preventing the invasion, whether such acts are contrary to their morals.....!"

Listy bit her lip angrily.

For the people who knew the truth, Baram's excuse was just simply nonsense.

But this was also common sense. In the political arena, the truth was often covered by what was called common sense.

During the four countries' talks, Akatsuki, who forcibly pushed for the peace agreement, was the best example.

Aleclesta, who believed in the Erdia Church, had always believed peace was the most important, it was naturally understandable for them to take a stance of not wanting to be involved in the war; However, Sherfield and Disdia's surveillance forces were both victims of the attack, their positional was naturally different than Aleclesta. Since war had already broken out for ten days, but Sherfield had not sent any troops to participate in the war, the conservatives inside the country had been issuing screams of injustice.

Sherfield's democrats had already stepped on tract and the Queen's authority was greatly reduced, if Listy continued to maintain the stance of waiting, it was possible that before the monarchy system was abolished, Sherfield would have already been split into two countries.

.....If Akatsuki had asked us for help.....



The conclusion of the four countries' talks had an international binding power. As long as Galevain had gone through formal diplomatic channels to charge Disdia their attack actions, perhaps Sherfield would be able to help.

Of course, Listy understood the reason why Akatsuki did not do so. In case Galevain sought assistance from Sherfield, then it will undoubtedly pull Sherfield into the firing line, right where Baram wanted it to be. Thus, Akatsuki could only declare himself as the Demon King and singly declare war on Disdia. This was not only just to defend Galevain, but at the same time, to protect Sherfield.

Thus, Listy had made up her mind, saying that they must repay Akatsuki's kindness.

"Zechs, is the investigation report from Ayersmarina out yet?"

The efforts that Akatsuki had made in the meeting had caused the three countries to agree on reinvestigating the attacks towards the surveillance forces. In the end, Disdia invaded and Galevain formally declared war, causing the action of investigating the truth to be temporarily stalled.

However, Listy had gone through private relationships to request Ayersmarina's professionals to reinvestigate the truth. As long as the covered truth was revealed, perhaps they will be able to break through the deadlock in front of their eyes.

Compared to Listy's expectations, Zechs could only let out a helpless sigh.

"Yes, it indeed came out.....However, it is simply a progress report."

After a short pause——

"Based on the current investigation results, the murderer was indeed the demon race, there is no room for doubt."

"Nnnn....."

Listy gave a downcast glance, and it was hard to conceal her inner disappointment. However, Zechs added another sentence:

"However, the investigation officer also expressed that the entire affair was overly perfect, and that revealed a bit of unnaturalness."

".....What does that mean?"

"Within the world, there is no situation that is perfect, more or less, there will be flaws."

Loutier replied.

“But this affair was quite perfect, it was perfect to an incredible extent, and there was not the slightest flaws.”

It was apparent that it was a deliberate camouflage.

“If we had found out about this in our first investigation.....”

Loutier bowed her head down and stared at the ground, and had an guilty expression.

However, Listy shook her head.

“Saying this right now will not help the situation. Under this kind of situation, anyone will also believe that it was the act of the demon race. At that time, we could not stand on the side of Galevain, and the so called camouflage is also only a hypothesis, and it is not an actual evidence, right?”

“Yes, right now, there is no evidence of the murderer pretending to be the demon race and attacking the surveillance forces.....”

Zechs interjected.

“If both sides had not declared war yet, the current findings will also help Akatsuki to turn over the tables. But since the situation have developed this far, I’m afraid that.....”

“.....”

Listy bit her lips resentfully.

She wanted to help Akatsuki, but she did not know where to start.

It was unlikely for Akatsuki, who was requesting for peace, to rush into war without a plan.

The current situation, must be within Akatsuki’s calculations.

Listy El Da Sherfield frowned and tried hard to think.

In the letter, Disdia had requested Sherfield to participate in the attack the following day. Considering the time to prepare the forces and the time to move, at the very latest, they would have to reply in the evening.

However, this was not yet the time to give up. As long as there was still some time, they must continue to think and try to find the answer.

Think quickly.

Think about what in the war, has Akatsuki seen?

Part 3

The current scene was filled with a faint light.

It was more gentle and brighter than the sun's rays, it was the inner qigong that was generated from Renkan Keikikou.

Akatsuki was currently activating the true ki inside his body to increase the healing abilities. The target was the dark elf race girl that was lying on a bed unconscious, which is also Riruru who was injured heavily during the attack of Disdia.

Most of the injuries from the wounded people were fractures or scratches that came from falls when they were fleeing, only Riruru's body had no obvious outer wounds. After her head received a terrible blow, Riruru has still yet to regain her consciousness.

Truthfully, if it was just based on the effects, then recovery magic would still be the best.

However, because of recovery magic's special properties, only a few people can use this type of magic, and unluckily within Galevain's residents, there were no recovery magic users, Chikage, Kuzuha and his other companions also do not have this ability, so they could only rely on Akatsuki to use inner qigong to treat the injured.

"....."

"Absolute focus brings absolute silence." Akatsuki stretched out his hand and placed it on top of Riruru's petite forehead, and send the healing true ki into her body. After some time, Riruru's pale face gradually restored some color.

".....Right now I can only do this much."

Akatsuki took back his hand from Riruru's forehead. The unconscious Riruru had already not been eating for several days, her bodily strength was greatly reduced, and she must accept inner qigong treatment every day.

"——Is it over?"

A calm inquiry came from behind. Akatsuki replied and slowly turned around.

Beside Riruru's bed, sat a girl with petite figure and had her arms around her knees.

It was Doumoto Kuzuha.

"Izumi was worried about you. If this continues on, it is possible that even you would not last."

Akatsuki slowly walked over and sat down beside Kuzuha.

"I've heard that you do not have much of an appetite these days, you do not even have a good rest at night right?"

"....."

Kuzuha did not reply Akatsuki's question

She was only staring silently at the unconscious Riruru.

Looking at Kuzuha's expression on her face, Akatsuki could not help but have personal feelings. Although Kuzuha's age was still small, she was still a returnee that was once summoned to an alternative world, even if she was not accustomed to others dying, but she should still have some degree of immunity. If he did not remember incorrectly, Kuzuha had been involved in a war between humans at a Alternative World called Kristya, and the result was that she failed to protect the people that she wanted to protect —— No matter how many times you experience it, this heartbreaking pain was still unbearable. Although the two of them had not met for long, but to Kuzuha, Riruru was absolutely a target that she wanted to protect.

".....Sorry, causing everybody to worry about me. However, I just cannot let this go....."

Kuzuha clenched her fists, her voice was very dry.

"If only I was a little stronger, then perhaps I could have protected Riruru.....This thought has been lingering around....."

"I can understand how you feel, but you do not have to feel such remorse."

Akatsuki slightly deepened his tone.

".....You do not understand."

Kuzuha muttered.

"There is no need to feel remorse due to your own powerlessness? Although it seems thoughtful, but deep down it was a very cruel way to say it. These arrogant lines, only the truly strong people are able to say it. Most people would always just regret about their own <Incompetence>, to strong people like you that would win regardless of strong enemies or difficulties, how would you understand the weak's ——"

Once she had said half, Kuzuha immediately noticed that she was wrong.

She raised her head and looked at Akatsuki with frightened eyes, pale faces and her voice was even trembling slightly.

"Sorry.....I actually placed all my anger on you.....What am I doing....."

“Don’t mind it, it’s okay.....I understand.”

Akatsuki revealed a calm smile, and gently hugged Kuzuha’s shoulders.



Kuzuha was still apologizing to Akatsuki constantly.

Until the very moment, Kuzuha finally remembered that Akatsuki really did understand her feelings right now.

——The past Akatsuki also cursed his own incompetence and powerlessness, and in the end, he finally became the strong person right now.

“Besides, the enemy that attacked Urumu and Riruru has strength that was comparable to mine right? If you really have the power to defeat him, then you would not be staying here.”

Akatsuki gave off a wry smile. He stared at Kuzuha who raised her head to look at him.

If Kuzuha really had this power, she would have long been incorporated into the A-class in JPN Babel, and even became a member of the Student Council, at that time, she would naturally have a distinctly different encounter with the B-class Akatsuki and Miu, the possibility of them becoming friends will not be too high.

“It is because you are the current class rep, so that’s why you would know us. And you’ve already tried your best, if you ask for too much, it is equal to deny our encounter and our current relationship.”

Don’t be mistaken.

“The reason why Riruru was injured was not because of your own power. If you were not there, Riruru would probably already be killed, and the other children will also probably not be able to escape.”

Listen up.

“Who says that you cannot protect anyone? You not only protected Riruru, but also protect the other children.”

“.....!”

Akatsuki’s consolation suddenly made Kuzuha break into tears.

The petite body did not hesitate to throw herself into Akatsuki’s arms.

Akatsuki gently stroked the weak and slender back of Kuzuha, and with a gentle tone.

“It had been hard for you, feel free to cry. Let me take on the burden of your pain and sorrow.”

There was nothing to worry about.

“This time, it’s my turn. Before you saved Riruru, now it’s my turn to save her. Don’t worry, I’ll definitely wake up her consciousness, and give you back a Riruru that is alive and kicking.

“.....Y...You really mean it.....?”

Kuzuha, who was upholding tears, raised her head. Akatsuki firmly nodded.

“Of course that is true. However, right now I require your strength, class rep. Are you willing to fight side by side with me once again?”

Kuzuha thought for a moment, and immediately, she calmly and resolutely nodded.

Akatsuki tried to wipe of Kuzuha’s tears, and said out an oath that came from within his heart.

“Class rep.....The person that made you cry was me, and the fellow who was wearing the Disdia armor. Don’t worry, I will take responsibility of you till the very end, at the same time, I will make sure that guy is responsible as well.”

Part 4

Sherfield Kingdom’s Great General Zechs Doltrake.

He, who is commanding the country’s army and the militia, had outstanding sword techniques, and was known as the <Crimson Sword King>.

When he came out of Listy’s office, it was already sunset.

After leaving Listy’s office, Zechs immediately headed towards the military meeting room for the forces of the country. After reaching his destination, he pushed open the heavy stone doors and went into the military meeting room. Under the rays of the sunset, the person that was waiting for Zechs in the military meeting room was a knight in his prime age with a burly body. Grant Bangert. Among the 5 lieutenants, he was the one that was trusted by Zechs the most.

“.....Looks like they have a conclusion.” When Zechs entered through the door, Grant immediately stood up from his chair.

Seeing Zechs nod, he casually replied back.

There was no need for Zechs to explain, Grant was already understood.

“Is this battle still unavoidable?”

“Listy does not want to send the troops, but.....”

Zechs said:

“But time is running out, and it beyond the control for Listy to say no. She probably already guessed the purpose of Akatsuki, but after all that, it is only a speculation. In the end, we will only be able to ask why on the battlefield.”

This was the decision that Listy had made after all that pondering. However, she did not intend to have a direct conflict against Akatsuki, sending out troops is only simply for support. Akatsuki, representing Galevain, had sent out a declaration of war towards Disdia, meaning that this war was directed at Disdia, Galevain had no reason to view Sherfield as an enemy —— This was already greatly accommodating for Sherfield.

That being the case, Sherfield definitely cannot fail to live up to Akatsuki’s plans.

“The forces will be launching at sunrise tomorrow, please inform the others for me.”

“Understood.....This time, will Queen Listy also follow the army’s expedition?”

“Yes, that’s correct. Just as a precaution, she would also bring Lulu with her.”

“I see.....It must be hard for her Majesty.”

Grant quietly lowered his eyelids. The incident about the surveillance forces being attacked had forced Sherfield to send out troops, Grant could understand the inner struggle within Listy.

.....Not to mention, the enemy this time is Akatsuki again.....

The duel before had already caused much struggle for Listy, since they will meet Akatsuki in the battlefield, the inner troubles within Listy was easy to imagine. Of course, Zechs and Loutier’s mood weren’t exceptionally good as well.

But as long as they send troops to participate in the battle, it is equal to have fulfilled the obligation of military allies, even if it was only rear support. Also, participating in the battle wasn’t without any benefits, after all, if the situation deteriorates, only the forces on the battlefield would be able to prevent the tragedy.

Disdia certainly did not have any wish to prevent the tragedy, and also did not have any expectations from Aleclasta.

Therefore, this work will naturally fall onto Sherfield.

.....If there was really anything just in case.....

Zechs secretly thought. Truthfully, he had a plan to avoid Akatsuki and Sherfield to be forced into a lose-lose situation, but he did not mention this plan in front of Listy.

And Zechs was quite sure, at that time, Disdia will absolutely have no objections. However, this plan could be only used on the battlefield, thus Zechs Doltrakes formally issued these orders:

“Relay it over. If we really meet on the battlefield, I will be the one to deal with Akatsuki.”

Part 5

In the ancient forest city, Forestnium, Galevain’s resident’s refuge.

Directly in the center stood a Sacred Tree that was a few hundred meters tall. As the symbol of Forestnium, the Sacred Tree’s trunk was divided into several floors, each floors has its own stairs, becoming a large living space.

Under the pitch-black color of the night, Ousawa Miu’s figure appeared at the top floor of the Sacred Tree.

Miu’s goal was to shower. The tangled roots of the Sacred Tree was spread throughout a wide area, aside for the underground water, there was even a natural hot spring that seep through the tree trunk through a pipe and was pushed upwards. Thus, at the very end of the pipe, which is also the top floor, the villagers used the Sacred Tree’s naturally formed holes to create a hot spring.

However, Miu was not at ease while bathing.

Just when Miu was about to push open the door to the hot spring, someone called her name from behind.

Currently —— she was even surrounded by several people.

The other party was numerous youths that lived in Forestnium, but Miu did not feel any fear, her face did not reveal any suspicious look either, after all, in the past few days, similar situations have occurred several times.

10 days ago, Miu made a decision ——The youths in front of her was currently protesting against Miu’s decision and had gathered here.

“Myuu-sama, this is no small matter —— please reconsider it!”

The other party's tone carried dissatisfaction and disapproval entered Ousawa Miu's ears, who had her back facing the door towards the hot spring.

"Declaring war to Disdia is taken for granted, after all, they killed off Elder Urumu, Galevain's soldiers will not forgive this despicable act. But——Why do you recognize that person as our representative?"

"I have already clearly explained it. After Urumu's unfortunate death, everybody wished for me to make a decision for Galevain's fate, and this is the conclusion that I came up with..... after discussing it with that person."

Miu's attitude was extremely calm, but her answer caused discontent among the youths.

"We indeed requested Myuu-sama to decide Galevain's fate, but Myuu's sama's decision was completely unexpected!"

"At first, pushing him to be the representative of Galevain was simply for a peace agreement. Since the peace agreement ended in failure, his mission is already over."

The youth's appeal entered her ears, Miu could not help but have feelings about it. These youths was caught up in loss and was anxious about the future of Galevain.

During the period of the peace agreement negotiations, Forestnium was suddenly attacked and the responsibility clearly lies on the other side. However, Disdia is a militant country, the residents in Forestnium simply could not compete with the powerful military strength the other side has. Thus, the request from the youths was clearly self-contradictory.

"However, without that person's help, this battle ——we have no chance of winning."

You should all understand this point, Miu suddenly paused for a moment.

"At present, the enemy still have not found the method to enter Forestnium; however, the enhanced barrier, that came in exchange of Urumu's life, is not permanent. When the barrier effect disappears ——do you think just us alone can defend Forestnium?"

Miu's words were justified, the youths at the scene all froze for a moment, but they quickly recovered and continued their aggressive tone as before.

"At that time, it should be fine if we can just invite that person to fight together with us."

"That's correct. He is an integral part of our combat power, but there is no need for him to become our leader."

It was a rather selfish way of saying it, they just wanted to use Akatsuki's power. However, Miu did not blame them, because they did not know where they were wrong. Inside the hearts of these youths, it was strongly dominated by anxiety, and they had long lost the ability to determine what was right and what was wrong.

Because of this, they hope that Miu would become the spiritual pillar for everyone. The Demon King Galious had used his overwhelming power to rival the humans. As the daughter of Galious, Miu undoubtedly was the only hope for lighting up their will to fight inside the residents, who were in the brink of despair. Ousawa Miu thought, if she was to become the new leader of Galevain, the youths in front of her would definitely become warriors in the front lines.

.....But.

Once they enter the battlefield, what was waiting for them eventually was the fate of death. This was not the outcome everybody would like to see. Thus, when her father was still alive, he had clearly expressed that he will be the last Demon King, and at the same time, he entrusted the safety of Miu, happiness of the demon race and their future to Akatsuki.

For both sides, Miu's existence would only cause Alayzard to be caught up in a never-ending war and deaths. After understanding Galious's intentions, Akatsuki decided to bring Miu with him back to his own world. Even if Miu's identity was to cause a huge uproar, but since Alayzard would not easily let Miu go, Akatsuki still did not regret his decision at that time. He even returned to Alayzard again in order to stand up for Miu and Galevain.

However, the youths in front of her do not appreciate it and even question the actions of Akatsuki.

"Why are you not willing to accept that person? Is it because he was the Hero that defeated my father?"

"That is also one of the reasons, but the matter isn't that simple."

"He is a human, and not one of the residents of Galevain."

"In the time of crisis, how can we allow him to become the leader of the demon race?"

Facing the barrages of accusations, Miu let out a rebuttal that made everyone speechless.

"If that's the case—— then why were you all willing to allow father to become the king?"

That shouldn't have forgotten about it, right?

“Father was also a human..... just like him.”

Miu’s words were all true, everybody suddenly quieted down.

At this moment.

“Myuu-sama, what we are concerned about is not his race.”

The youths surrounding Miu automatically headed left and right and allowed a path. One young man slowly walked forward, the other people all had trust and expectations towards him.

“Kurt.....”

After the young man had walked up in front of her, Miu silently called out his name. This tall and slender dark elf was the grandson of Urumu. You could only see Kurt look at Miu who was in front of him.

“We simply only wanted revenge, towards the people who murdered my grandfather.....to have a fight to death with the murderer who killed the village elder. But he forbids us to fight the enemy on the battlefield.”

Kurt slowly said out everybody’s feelings.

“We also have the right to fight on the battlefield, but as a result, that right was deprived from us. The future of Galevain that we placed into Myuu’s hands had simply become his reason and excuse. Myuu believes that he is the new representative of Galevain, thus, he believes that he has earned all the support from the citizens of Galevain. Thus, he ignores our opinion to fight and fights alone in the battlefield with the enemy.”

This was the point that Kurt and the other youths were not able to accept.

“.....The elder died in the hands of the enemy, we also do not have the right to head to the battlefield.....How should we vent for the wronged heroic soul of my grandfather and our inner anger?”

“.....”

Myuu quietly listened to Kurt’s request, she also understood the inner anger within Kurt’s heart. Even if she was to speak, she could not allow them to join the battle, or the efforts they did up till now will all vanish into thin air.

“Please believe that person, believe in the one that me and my father both trusted. He must have his own concerns for not letting you all into the battlefield.”

Miu’s explanation was immediately caused a refute by the youths.

“Trust? How can a person, who does not put our views and thoughts into the matter, earn our trust?”

“And he does not plan on attacking Disdia, he might have planned on never to start a war in the very beginning. Does he want to quell everybody’s anger by just simply casually fighting a few battles?”

Kurt’s words immediately won everybody’s agreement.

“He is an outsider, he has no qualifications to lead us. This is our battle and is not something we can leave it to others!”

Akatsuki is not to be trusted, this was the consensus of the youths at the scene.

“I see.....”

Miu muttered and looked down to the ground.

“——It seems that I have no choice but to tell the truth.”

After raising her head, Miu used her sharp eyes to stare at everybody.

Awed by the prowess of Miu, the youths at the scene were all afraid of speaking up, but Miu could only apologize to Akatsuki in her heart.

.....Sorry. I know that this is a secret that can not be told to the public, but.....

However, Miu could not longer hold it in and decided to say the secret in her heart.

“Why did that person officially declare war on Disdia? Yes, it is to persuade all of you, who are seeking a battle! Based on the situation at that time, it would inevitably lead to a devastating war unilaterally. And reporting the atrocities of Disdia, utilizing the international media to force both sides to achieve a peace agreement will not happen because you all will not be able to accept it. After all, for the current you, Disdia’s actions is inexcusable.”

Akatsuki did not deliberately ignore Kurt’s and the other’s feelings. In fact, it was the exact opposite. It was because he is able to understand their feelings so he had used his official declaration as a well to express their anger.

“However, Disdia’s interior will also remain the same. If Disdia really wishes to accept the peace agreement, then they would not have attacked Forestnium during the meeting. In order words, if we had continued to stick

with the peace agreement route, both sides will only achieve peace on the surface, but in truth, the current situation will be no different than right now.”

But——

“Even so, that person is still reluctant to give up easily. Even though he knew that the current situation was extremely dangerous, that person still believed that true peace will come to this world. This is the reason why he is reluctant to hurt the enemy. Although Galevain is the side that officially declared war, but as long as it follows the policy of not hurting the enemy, the other side will eventually notice that Galevain did not have the goal of wiping out Disdia when it waged the war.”

After continuing to weaken the enemy’s troops and causing the enemy to gradually end up at a disadvantage, stopping the war will naturally appear in the mind of the other side. And because Disdia is not the country that declared war, it will not take the initiative to propose a truce. After all to Disdia, stopping the war is the equivalent of losing, it will be undoubtedly the same as if it had declared that it had lost to the world.

However, if Galevain was the one that proposed to stop, Disdia will consider it. At that time, Akatsuki’s policy of not killing will play a large and key role. Even if Disdia persistently refuse to compromise, you could still use diplomatic means to persuade Sherfield and Aleclasta to come forward. At that time, due to the situation of their alliance, Disdia will not be able to just say out their own opinion. This way the two countries will come forward to talk and at the same time, Disdia will be able to keep their pride.

But doing so is not without any risk.

Thus, Akatsuki had left a path to retreat.

“Why do you think that person is willing to become the Demon King?”

Miu revealed a tearful expression and said out Ousawa Akatsuki’s consideration.

“If the situation does not develop as what was expected, that person intends to bear all the responsibility. <After the peace agreement was destroyed, the enraged Rogue Hero, with his powerful strength, threatened the peaceful demon race to push him into becoming the new Demon King. At the same time, without the agreement of the people in the race, he had declared war to Disdia>. Do you understand it now? If I.....The Demon King Galious’s daughter stood up as the representative of Galevain, it will undoubtedly become the excuse that Disdia use to destroy Galevain. In

order to prevent this tragedy from occurring, that person had positioned the war as his own independent judgment and is unrelated to Galevain.

Also, there was actually another purpose of Akatsuki to become the Demon King.

Once the two sides had entered a state of war, the previous Demon King's daughter, in other words Miu, would become the number one enemy target. Phil Barnett or Zahhark's assassination was the best evidence.

So Akatsuki could only claim the title of the Demon King, in order to attract the enemy's attention and also become the top target the enemy wishes to get rid of.

In addition——

“Is it really true that not attacking Disdia means that he does not wish to fight this war?”

That was false.

“That person only does not wish for the tragedy of Urumu to be staged again, so he insisted on staying at Forestnium. No matter what actions the enemy takes, he would be able to react immediately.”

Kurt and the others was extremely unhappy based on the attitude of Akatsuki trying to reduce the military actions.

This was all because Akatsuki had made the decision to care about the safety concerns of the villagers.

“As for the purpose not to allow us to participate in the war.....”

Facing the surprised Kurt, Myuu attempted to suppress her own emotions.

“If you were to appear onto the battlefield, won't the idea about saying that you were threatened will instantly be destroyed?”

Perhaps they could claim that they were afraid of Akatsuki to the outside, thus Galevain's citizens could not participate in the battle: However, once they become the captives of Disdia, the other party could use torture, drugs or even magic to understand the truth of the situation. At that time, all their efforts will be wasted.

Thus Akatsuki made a decision.

“Not only all of you, that person will not even let me go onto the battlefield.”

Miu recalled the expression that Akatsuki had at that time, and could not hold back her tears.

She cried. Even though Akatsuki was all doing this for the sake of Miu and these youths——

“<I understand your feelings, but I hope that you can still hold it in. Sorry.>
.....Did you know? That person actually apologized to me!”

Miu’s cries echoed through the huge space.



After learning the truth, the reactions of all the youths were all the same.

They could only stand still and could not say a single word.

They could only see the emotional outburst of Miu as her chest dramatically moved up and down, and as she let out the sounds for shortness of breath.

After a brief silence.

“Why.....Why does he not tell us?”

Kurt looked at the ground and murmured to himself.

Miu breathed in and slowly said:

“Because this secret must not be revealed to the others, otherwise true peace will never come. This is the reason why that person does not tell everybody the truth. He can only keep the secret and allow the secret to become a secret forever.....”

However, Kurt’s misunderstanding of Akatsuki was too biased, thus Miu could not help it.

However, Miu does not regret her decision. After all, inside Kurt and the other youths’ eyes, she could no longer see the suspicion and distrust towards Miu and Akatsuki.

“I will say it once again——Please believe him, believe in the one that me and my father both trusted. “

Kurt and the other youths did not responded to the request of Miu, but they all silently nodded.

“Thank you.....”

Miu’s face emerged a hint of a smile.

She could finally manage to show a slight smile.

After wiping the tears from the corner of her eyes, Ousawa Miu had felt many emotions.

Father, herself and Akatsuki. Urumu, and the inhabitants of Forestnium.

After a long period of time, everybody’s ideas and thoughts were finally one.

Part 6

After knowing Akatsuki’s intentions, Kurt and the other youths returned to the residential area located at the middle floors.

After watching the crowd leave, Miu was finally able to enter the bath. However, only to see her subconsciously sigh as she walked into the changing room and pulled the doorknob.

“.....No, no.”

Noticing that she had almost relaxed her guard, Miu hurriedly shook her head. Galevain and Disdia was currently in a state of war, she must maintain a high degree of vigilance, any negligence could possibly lead to irreversible consequences.

.....I must pull myself together.....

Although it was voluntary, but after becoming the new Demon King, Akatsuki had arranged all the small and large battles by himself. As the former Demon King's daughter, Miu also wanted to help make a contribution to everyone, that is to become the pillar inside the minds of the Forestnium residents. Thus, facing the hot-blooded youths like Kurt, Miu had to firmly continue the stance of trusting Akatsuki; in front of the other residents that were afraid of the battle, Miu had to keep smiling and give them confidence and courage. This was Miu's duty, and also the only thing she could do.

“Yes.....”

Miu nodded, and once again regained her mentality. Then she began to remove her clothing.

The bath was made using the Sacred Tree's trunks, the surrounding furnishings were also made of wood. Just when Miu was prepared to place her clothes into the naturally formed cabinet by the trunk, the corner of her eyes suddenly noticed an unusual object.

Inside the neatly organized cabinet, one of the cabinet had clothes placed in it, representing that someone had already entered the bath. Miu was slightly surprised, aside from her, she could not think of anyone else in the village that would visit the Sacred Tree's bath in the middle of the night.

Who is it? Just when her heart apologized, Miu stretched out her hand to take out the clothing from inside the cabinet.

“Huh.....Isn't this.....”

Miu could not help but widen her eyes. The clothes inside the cabinet was an replicate of the black battle costume that the ancient Demon King wore. Within Alayzard, there is also only one person who would wear this type of outfit.

Miu look at the door leading to the bath, thinking that the youth on the other side of the door —— Akatsuki.

“.....If it’s for a bit, then it’s fine.”

After Miu muttered an excuse for herself, she tightly hugged the black battle clothes in her arms. As she closed her eyes, her naked skin felt the warmth that Akatsuki had left on the clothing. Ousawa Miu firmly believes that this must be the remains of the “Heat” from the battle Akatsuki had during the day.

“Ah.....”

Thinking up to here, Miu suddenly felt that her heart was beating rapidly, and it was gradually beating faster.

.....What should I do.....Even though I know I shouldn’t.....But.....

Miu’s gaze stared directly at the door leading to the bath.

——Ever since Akatsuki had become the new representative for Galevain, 10 days had already passed since he had officially declared war towards Disdia. During this period of time, Miu and Akatsuki had never been together to the extent that they did not even have the chance to talk.

No matter what, they had to worry about the other people’s feelings. After all, not every Forestnium residents gladly accepted the fact about Akatsuki being the demon race representative, Kurt was the best example. In case the side that opposes it sees Miu walk closely together with Akatsuki, it might create a stimulus to them, causing a misunderstanding even to Miu, and believing that Miu and Akatsuki had a secret between them that they could not share with anyone else. Once those people believe that Miu’s judgment was based on her own emotions, it would bound to cause them to be dissatisfied and unease.

Currently, Galevain is facing the strongest country in Alayzard, everybody must be united, and it cannot be divided.

Thus, Miu could only keep a distance from Akatsuki if it was possible.

But.....

.....If it was right now.....

The next battle will probably be the battle between the main forces. Akatsuki and his comrades will be facing the most dangerous situation.

Greeting Akatsuki and wishing him a safe return, shouldn’t be too overboard, right.

Thus, Miu placed Akatsuki's battle costume back into the cabinet and slowly stretched out her right hand.

The exit of the bath was right in front of her eyes, but Miu did not plan to leave, and instead gently lifted the lock towards the exit. Ka-cha, the door to the bath was locked by Miu.

The space inside the bath was completely isolated, Miu and Akatsuki was inside a secret room alone.

".....!"

Miu swallowed her saliva, then picked up her towel and wrapped it around her body and stretched out her right hand towards the entrance of the bath.

Here is a space that was as wide as a cave.

From the ceiling to the floor, even the surrounding walls were formed by the huge tree trunk.

Standing on the wooden floor with bare feet was extremely comfortable, Miu passed through the white water vapor and headed slowly to the depths of the bath. After some time, the sound of flowing water entered her ears. Following the duct pipe that extends from the Sacred Tree, it draws out the natural hot spring water from underground, forming a large steaming hot bath on the uppermost area of the Sacred Tree.

A young youth was currently immersed inside the naturally formed bath.

His elbow rested on the side of the bath. The person that was leisurely enjoying the natural hot spring was the completely naked Akatsuki.

Miu suddenly stopped her footsteps and Akatsuki slowly turned around, as if he had long been aware of the existence of Miu.

"Hi.....How is it? What are you standing there?"

Akatsuki's tone was extremely calm, as if Miu's appearance was natural.

"This isn't when you should say "How is it"You can't be pretending to be a fool, right?"

Miu sighed. Her cheeks were slightly flushed and she unconsciously pressed the towel onto her body.

"This is... the woman's bath."

That's right. This is a woman's bath, the bath on top of the Sacred Tree is not a mixed bath. The male's bath was located on the other side of the Sacred Tree, it was separated by the woman's tree by the tree trunk.

But she only saw Akatsuki smile.

“You’re really stupid.....What’s the point of bathing in the male’s bath?”

“The purpose of taking a bath is naturally relaxing yourself, but a male bathing in the woman’s bath is a serious violation of the rules.”

After a short pause, Miu spoke again:

“If Kurt and the others discovered it, it wouldn’t be just scolding a few times and it’ll be okay.”

“If I was sneaking around and peeking, then that’s fine. But I am taking a bath without hiding anything. What is there to be angry?”

And, Akatsuki continued to speak:

“If I chose the male bath, I will bound to encounter a lot of people who dislike me. Especially since the final battle is approaching, it is best not to intentionally stimulate those people, right? So I took advantage of the midnight time, where no one will be here, and ran off to the woman’s bath to shower.”

“How can you just make your own decision.....”

“Sorry, this isn’t my own decision. In fact, I had already obtained the approval of all the females in the village through Izumi.”

“What? Really?”

Miu was surprised, she had never heard of it. Could it be that Chikage forgot to tell her? No, the cautious Chikage will naturally not make such a mistake.

.....It must have been purpose, really now Chikage.

Chikage must have known that Miu had not being alone together with Akatsuki for a while. If they were to talk while avoiding other people’s eyes and ears, the female bath was the most suitable place.

Thus, Miu felt somewhat thankful to Chikage’s intimate arrangement. However, she would still have to complain to Chikage the next time she saw her.

“When you were looking at the Black battle outfit in the cabinet, you should have already guessed that I was inside bathing, right?”

“Nnnnn.....That’s.....”

Miu was speechless, but Akatsuki just smiled.

“That’s right. Okay, quickly enter now, be careful not to catch a cold.”

“Yes.....”

In fact, Miu only wanted to bless Akatsuki for a safe return, aside from that, she had no other intentions. Only that Akatsuki's attitude was overly open, as if he did not care about breaking into the woman's bath, Miu suddenly did not know how to say it.

Miu could only stiffly nod and sat on the edge of the bath. She then picked up a wooden barrel, fetched some water and poured it over her entire body from her shoulders. Then, she slowly entered the bath.

"Hey hey hey, who would enter the bath with a towel?"

Akatsuki suddenly stretched out his hand and stripped off Miu's towel that was around her body.

"UWAHHHHHH—!"

Miu turned pale and hurriedly sunk into the water, her two hands unconsciously covered the private parts around her chest and legs.

"You, what are you doing!"

"You can't enter the bath with a towel. It can't be that you do not know even the basic courtesies to a public bath?"

"Nnnn"

After being scolded by Akatsuki, Miu, who felt unwilling, revealed grudging eyes.

.....You do not know how much courage I mustered in order to overcome my inner shame to come here.....!

Miu, who was completely red, bit tightly on her lower lips, Akatsuki could not help but reveal a wry smile.

"I won't eat people, why did you hide so far away? Even though you knew I was in the bath, but you still came in, you must have been looking for me, right?"

"Yes, that's correct, but....."

"Then come over."

Before she finished speaking, Akatsuki caught Miu's wrist.

"No, don't be like this.....I will be completely seen!"

"Okay, okay, it's fine if I don't look."

Miu was forcibly pulled by Akatsuki and completely could not resist. Only seeing Miu spin half a circle by Akatsuki and letting her had her back towards Akatsuki as she sat between Akatsuki's legs.

“Ah.....”

“It’s okay if it’s like this, right? This way I can barely see anything.”

“Yes.....It’s okay.....”

Akatsuki’s voice came from behind and entered her ears, Miu embarrassedly nodded. This was like the principle of how a lamp could shine faraway, but not nearby. If Miu had her back facing Akatsuki, her inner embarrassment also naturally decreased.

And.....

.....This kind of thing.....looks like a couple.....

Suddenly, an inexplicable shyness appeared. Only seeing Miu bow down her head, her expression revealing a tiny bit of shyness and coyness.

“So.....What were you finding me for?”

“Ah.....This.....”

She had nearly forgot that she had specially came to thank Akatsuki for everything he did and wish for him to have a safe return.

And the sudden situation was completely out of Miu’s expectations.

.....Ah.....My boobs are actually floating in the water.....!

Her voluptuous boobs were floating in the bath. For Miu, this was a common situation. The problem is that Akatsuki’s action of forcibly pulling Miu next to him had caused many ripples. Under the ripples, her left and right boobs were swaying at irregular angles.

The boobs that were swaying left and right had created an erotic image, as if she was seducing Akatsuki.

“.....Ah? What is it?”

“N...Nothing.....!”

Miu hurriedly shook her head and as a result, created larger ripples.

Right now was not the time to wish for Akatsuki’s safe return.

.....What should I do.....If he sees this.....

At the beginning of when they were bathing together, Akatsuki’s reckless actions had already shocked Miu. Under this situation where she constantly stimulated , it was undoubtedly courting her own destruction. Thus Miu shrank her back and tried to cover her boobs by hiding it under the water.

“.....Right, there was something I was curious about.”

Akatsuki suddenly spoke.

“You are a mixed between a dark elf and a human?”

“T...That’s right. My mother was a dark elf.....so I am considered half-elf.”

Miu replied in an embarrassed manner.

“However, you appearance looks exactly like a human, there is no traces of the elf’s special characteristics of pointed ears.”

Akatsuki looked at Miu.

“Galious also said that you looked similar to him.....But shouldn’t an average half elf generally favor the elf-race’s lineage?”

“Actually when I was small, I looked more like a elf race child.”

Miu mentioned her own childhood.

“When I was small, I looked like the current Riruru.”

Miu had inherited the dark elf’s special characteristics of dark colored skin and a pair of pointed ears from her mother. But perhaps Miu was a special half-elf, as her age increased, her father’s lineage gradually became more clear and overshadowed her mother’s lineage.

“It was probably during the 4 or 5 years at puberty. My body gradually grew and my appearance became more and more like a human.”

“Oh, I see.”

“Am I strange?”

“Not at all. You are you, there is nothing strange at all. Isn’t it?”

“.....Yes.”

Akatsuki’s confirmation made Miu felt extremely pleased. She nodded and revealed a hint of a smile.

At that time, Akatsuki spoke again:

“So.....What were you finding me for?”

Under Akatsuki’s reminder, Miu finally remembered her purpose for coming her.

But the current priority was to cover her boobs that were swaying from the ripples. Thus, Miu could not say it out.

“I.....I came to help you wish your back.”

Miu blurted the excuse that flashed through her and Akatsuki immediately revealed an comfortable smile.

“Huh.....So you also have a gentle side, I really couldn’t tell. Then okay, I’ll be relying on you.”

Thus Akatsuki immediately stood up from the hot water and turned to have his back face Miu and sat down on the floor. Seeing this, Miu could not help but be relieved.

.....Thank god.....at least he would finally not be able to take a glance.

After the crisis ended, Miu also left the bath and slowly walked towards Akatsuki.

She kneeled down towards Akatsuki’s back.

“Then I’ll use this.”

Miu picked up the towel that was draped on Akatsuki’s shoulder. And at the same time, picked up a black fruit from the wall that was the size of a baseball. This fruit was called Seiruyu, the liquid inside had the effect of cleansing, just like a natural soap. Miu rubbed the towel with the liquid from Seiruyu.

“Then.....I’ll wash now.”

With a slightly nervous tone, Miu slowly began to wash Akatsuki’s back.

At the same time when the soapy bubbles towel moved back and forth across Akatsuki’s back, Miu did not forget to ask Akatsuki where it needs to be pressed harder. Until after she had finished washing his back, she then used a bucket of water and slowly washed away the bubbles.

At this moment, Ousawa Miu carefully looked at Akatsuki.

A wide and thick back.

After looking at it carefully at a close range, she only noticed that Akatsuki’s body was extremely muscular. While thinking that this muscular body had protected her numerous times before, Miu could not help but have mixed feelings.

“.....”

After she recovered, Miu was suddenly in shock as her own cheek was planted against Akatsuki and her huge boobs were even tightly pressed onto Akatsuki’s back. But what was strange was that Miu was not embarrassed at all.

“.....What is it?”

Akatsuki inquired with his back facing Miu, his tone was extremely calm.

“.....The next battle, it should determine the outcome of the war, right?”

Using these words as the opening, Miu naturally poured out her own expectations and wish.

“I hope that you can safely return ——I only wanted to say this to you.”

“.....I see.”

Akatsuki's tone was also extremely calm

“There is nothing to worry about, I will definitely come back alive. If you really have to pray ——“

He paused for a moment.

“——Why not pray for the day where true peace will arrive.”

After a long silence, Miu quietly left Akatsuki's back.

“Okay, now it is my turn to wash your back.”

Although he had just finished saying this, Akatsuki suddenly turned around.

“UWAHHHHHHHHH ——!”

Miu was shocked and hurriedly turned her back towards Akatsuki, she managed to avoid her naked appearance being seen by Akatsuki and also avoided Akatsuki's naked appearance to being seen by her.

“You...Why do you suddenly turn around?”

“Normally, you would turn, right? Wouldn't the difficulty be too high if I had to wash your back while facing away from you?”

Akatsuki shook his head and gave a wry smile.

“This.....No thanks, I can wash myself.”

Miu strongly declined Akatsuki's proposal, and her inner heart felt an incomparable fear. Akatsuki, who specializes in Renkan Keikikou, could freely control everybody's inner ki. If she let him wash her back, it was basically a suicidal action.

“Why are you being so polite? When the girls under Melissa received my back washing service, every one of them became extremely beautiful. The only drawback was that ——“

“There is no need for you to say, I already know! It must have felt too good so that they were not even able to walk steadily, right?”

“Huh, you sure are very clear about it.”

Akatsuki's nonchalantly response entered her ears, Ousawa Miu could not help but remember the painful memories. Before when Miu was buying lingerie on the streets, Akatsuki had willfully played with her boobs under the guise of trying it out. This time, Miu would not let Akatsuki succeed.

However, Akatsuki clearly did not take Miu's resistance seriously.

"That being the case, there is no need to dwell on it. Okay, let's begin."

"W...Wait ——AHHHHHHHH!"

Akatsuki's palm had just been placed on her back, but Miu issued out a seductive cry. The slippery feeling seems to have brought forth an incomparable numbness, Akatsuki's palm was filled with the liquid from Seiruyu.

.....W...What should I do.....!

Her body did not have any strength. Akatsuki's gentle touch was enough to make Miu's legs limp. And Miu could not turn around to stop Akatsuki, otherwise her naked appearance will be completely seen by Akatsuki.

"W...Why are you using your hands.....No, don't be like this.....At least use a towel....."

The irresistible pleasure made Miu tremble. It was already dangerous for Akatsuki to directly touch her, plus the slippery feeling from the soap bubbles was enough to make Miu lose consciousness.

But.....

"How can I help the girls wash with a towel? That's too unromantic."

Ignoring Miu's protests, Akatsuki continued to use his own hands to wash Miu's back. Through Akatsuki's palms, Miu could carefully feel the true ki slowly entering her body, just like a feeling of warmth spreading slowly through her body.

"AH.....KU.....EHHHH, NNn.....AHHHH!"

Miu tightly bit her lips and desperately resisted, but she still issued out strange noises.

Miu had to admit that the situation in front of her now, her own body was really more sensitive than before.

.....It must be because of theaphrodisiac being sucked out from her body last time.....

Ousawa Miu remembered back when they were at Melissa's brothel, the healing method to suppress the overwhelming pleasure. Miu's body and

soul was gently torn and completely enjoyed the thrill of being conquered. That's right, the impression of that was still impressive and it was impossible to forget. Miu knew that her own body had been completely developed by Akatsuki, and it had pushed open the forbidden doors and entered a new realm. Ousawa Miu already could not go back.

"Okay, raise your hands....."

"——Ah! AHHHHHH!"

Akatsuki's hands suddenly passed through her arms. At the same time Miu exclaimed, her body became unusually stiff. Akatsuki's ten fingers flew and moved back and forth from below her arms, but Miu did not feel embarrassed. She could not have believed that she was that sensitive below her arms. This sweet pleasure was too intense and had completely stripped Miu from her embarrassment. While she was hazy, Miu's heart only had one idea.

Akatsuki's stroking was too comfortable.

"Ahhh....."

At the same time Miu let out a seductive cry, Miu's entire body became limp and lied on Akatsuki's arms. She greedily felt Akatsuki's temperature.

The tiny actions had made Miu's entire body tremble and revel in the pleasure.

And the event wasn't over yet. Akatsuki's hands began to move forward slowly.

"Ah.....No.....Let me wash myself....."

While her back rubbed back and forth against Akatsuki's chest, Miu could not believe that she would release such an intractable seductive sound. However, this was only verbal resistance, Akatsuki certainly did not have any plans to stop.

"Why are you so courtesy? There is nothing in the world that could make you more beautiful than my hands."

Akatsuki's tone was gentle but at the same time, cruel. He easily rejected Miu's feeble resistance.

.....Ah.

Ousawa Miu watched Akatsuki's palm devour her own boobs.

The next second.

"Ah ——AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Under Akatsuki's hug, Miu's body suddenly trembled with excitement. This unusual stimulation made Miu's heart afraid, but Miu's body betrayed her own heart. The constant pleasure from Akatsuki's palms that were on top of her boobs caused her to tremble, as if waves were continuously hitting the shores. The white pieces of meat that were overflowing from Akatsuki's fingers also exuded an erotic atmosphere.

The tip gradually shrank and let out a few bubbles.

.....Ah.....The feeling of bubbles sliding down.

Under the effects of gravity, the bubbles in front of her chest flowed slowly down her white skin, bringing Miu an indescribable pleasure.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHH....Eh, fu.....AHH!"

「ほら、腕上げろ……」
「ひあつ!?、っあああああつ」

暁月の手が両脇へと差し込まれ、それだけで美兔は嬌声と共に全身を硬直させた。



Even the sound from her nose was becoming more erotic. While she was revelling in the pleasure, Miu could not help but think:

.....What should I do?

Akatsuki's palms had brought Miu an unprecedented pleasure, Miu was about to lose control. The strong and powerful arms tightly wrapped around Miu's body, this kind of feeling as if she was conquered brought Miu extreme joy. Her body was gradually accepting the pleasure of being conquered, her defense was collapsing step by step, and finally declared surrender. The past feeling of pleasure had made Miu lose consciousness, but now she was still able to remain awake. This made her face the brutal facts.

Ousawa Miu had become more erotic than before.

At this moment.

"Speaking of which, I tasted humans and elf ears, but I have never tasted a half-elf."

While her entire body was enveloped by a sweet pleasure, Miu could clearly hear Akatsuki's own mutter. Akatsuki's finger tips stroke back and forth along Miu's ears, and her ears could clearly feel the hot breath from Akatsuki.

"N...No.....I can't hold it"

The intense pleasure attacked her heart, Miu suddenly begun to cry. She already could not deal with the immediate pleasure, but yet Akatsuki brought forth another intense pleasure. However, Miu was certain, Akatsuki will not stop there and she was gradually looking forward to the further pleasures.

"Ah.....Fu.....Ku.....AHHHHH!"

After she swallowed the accumulated saliva, Miu turned her head and stared at Akatsuki behind her.

Akatsuki's mouth and his white teeth. Ousawa Miu could clearly see, Akatsuki's teeth gently bit her own ears.

"——!"

This time, Miu's eyes finally rolled around and she lost consciousness.

Part 7

——20 Minutes later.

Ousawa Akatsuki was currently at the top of the Sacred Tree in Forestnium. This was the highest point in the forest, in the daytime, you could even see the opposite horizons.

However, right now it is late at night, what was in front of him was darkness. Akatsuki quietly stared at the object hidden in the darkness.

Then at this moment ——

“You actually hid here worrying.....Akki, you really seem like a boy in puberty.

Suddenly a lazy voice came from behind him. Akatsuki did not even have to turn around and could guess who it was, so he only smiled slightly.

“I only just showered, so I came to feel the breeze.”

“Just showered.....Right, just now I met the vice president down there.

Kaidou said.

“Vice President’s face was flushed with an indignant and disturbed expression. Do you know why she was like that?”

“About that.....I’m not sure.”

Akatsuki vaguely responded.

Under Akatsuki’s biting attack, Miu’s consciousness flew away. After a period of time, Chikage, Kuzuha and Haruka noticed that Miu had not come back and went to the bath to look. However, the bath’s entrance was locked from the inside, so the three of them could not enter and could only stand outside and wait. At this moment, the entrance’s door suddenly opened from the side, Akatsuki appeared in front of the trio —— However, completely nude. Haruka immediately screamed and escaped, Akatsuki could only request Chikage and Kuzuha to take care of Miu. Miu, who had lost consciousness, had a mouthwatering smile. Kuzuha could not help but take a glance at Akatsuki and Akatsuki did not mind Kuzuha’s reactions.

.....During this time, this person was too stiff, she needed to relax.

Miu was the former Demon King, Galious’s, daughter. Strictly speaking, she is also the princess of Galevain. Miu, who knew her identity and responsibilities clearly, had to play the role of a leader in front of the Forestnium residents and attempted to become everybody’s pillar.

However, under this kind of state where she was overly nervous, she had accumulated a lot of pressure over the ten days. Thus, Akatsuki wanted to help Miu relax and have a good rest. This is why Akatsuki requested Chikage to use the woman's bath. The current Miu had given her all to do everything she could do and only Akatsuki could dispel the inner tension of Miu.

Finally, Akatsuki's plans were successful, but Miu's reactions were bigger than what he had expected.

.....I can't believe that the effects of biting her ear would be that exaggerated, this is a great discovery.

Ousawa Akatsuki thought: Next time punishing Miu, biting her ears is not a bad choice.

At this moment, Kaidou walked next to Akatsuki and stared at the same darkness.

“——The next time, it is the final battle, what are the odds of winning?”

A smile emerged on his face.

“No matter what, we will still need to be careful. If we want this and that, in the end, we may not get anything.”

Kaidou's warning was exchanged with Akatsuki's snort.

“Stop it okay? We are preparing to finish the goal that had never been completing since ancient times, if we are not a bit greedy, then how can we face ourselves?”

Akatsuki revealed an arrogant expression.

“Winning and signing a peace treaty after the battle, all of it are goals that I want to achieve. If we declare that we are going to lose in the very beginning, then nothing really happens.”

Akatsuki did not want it to be restored to original state, but rather wants to have peace as well.

“Kaidou, I'll need your help. I'm expecting your performance, my best friend.”

“Best friend? These words are really nice.....Fine, who told me I was worthless when I defended and allowed the enemies to take advantage of it? I can only take this opportunity to wash away my bad name.”

Kaidou gave a slight smile.

“But then again, wars could only have victory and defeat, the idea is simple.....However, a peace treaty is different.”

Saying up to here, Kaidou suddenly concealed his smiling expression.

“Can you really see the path that leads to the future?”

“A peace treaty has huge repercussions, it is indeed a thorny issue.”

But also because of this, so that there is value to it.

“I will just do it.....The last time I visited Sherfield, I already laid down the seeds, at that time, there should be a way.”

Ousawa Akatsuki revealed a confident smile.

He stared into the distance and attempted to stretch his hand into the darkness, in order to find the dawn of peace.

Chapter 2 - A War where a Hero Doesn't Exist

Part 1

The holy religious country of Aleclasta was founded based on the teachings of the Church of Richard.

Its capital wasn't located on the ground, rather it floated high in the clouds, the city of Aslanda.

In the innermost part of the island was the headquarters of the Church of Richard.

However opposite of the ornate cathedral, engraved with its teaching, lied a secret space that only a small number of the senior clergy knew of.

It was an open air garden filled with countless flowers in full bloom.

Yet for all it's beauty only a chosen few were able to step foot into this secret garden.

The view from there was like the perspective of a God looking down on the earth, Alayzard.

In the center of the garden was a white table.

The top two of the Church were sitting there side by side.

"Well, it seems to be finally entering the main battle..... much faster than expected," muttered Pope Volk, and after sipping his cup of tea, "And how is the current situation?"

"Conceivably not wanting to repeat the same mistakes that cost them the last war. Disdiya mobilized hundreds of thousands of troops, and at the moment only a small handful of troops are left to guard the most significant checkpoints along its border. It appears they are determined to win."

The second-in-command in the Church -- the Archbishop Miranda answered with a smile. She quickly added,

"Sherfied is following the same strategy as last time in deploying its troops with only tens of thousands of mobilized. However, excluding General Zechs, their Secretary of affairs Loutier and Queen Listy are also taking part in the military campaign this time around."

"Hmm..... then on that point, Sherfied is also bringing out its full strength."

Volk lightly squeezed his long beard looking very pleased,

"Is the battlefield still the central plains surrounding the Wandering forest?"

"-- No, it seems to be the neighboring Grand Canyon of Gorudono this time."

Miranda pointed out the rocky terrain along the eastern part of the Wandering forest was the battlefield.

The armies will probably have to advance along the bottom of the canyon. However with the intricate channels of the ravine, and the towering almost vertical rock face on both sides of the road attacking through this route will be extremely restricted. Disdiya will be forced to divide up its large army into several small squadrons.

"This has to be a tactic of Akatsuki's to lure the enemy..... but how can Emperor Baram allow himself to fall this easily into his trap?"

"It's probably because Forestnium is still enshrouded by that powerful barrier."

Miranda replied and,

"With it, it is impossible to invade Forestnium. Disdiya can only target their new Demon King, Akatsuki. In that event Akatsuki has chosen Gorudono as the battlefield, and Disdiya can do nothing but comply."

"But still, it's the perfect place for ambushes or guerrilla warfare. It will be too easy to fall into a trap. Additionally the most crucial factor is the narrowness of the road. It is unsuitable for their army movements. Up to now Disdiya easily had the numerical advantage in the open plains, and so far their army was no match for Akatsuki. Now that the battlefield has moved away from the plains into the canyon, wouldn't it give them even less of a chance of winning?"

"I believe Emperor Baram also concurs with that, and is still confident there is a good chance of winning."

The reason was very simple.

"All of Akatsuki's actions have proven one thing so far. The purpose of this war is to facilitate a peace agreement, and he will unlikely kill any of Disdiya's soldiers during the battle."

Baram must have calculated a scheme to beat him at his own game. Since his opponent had no intentions of killing, even if the battlefield's topography was very disadvantageous to his side, until the end he can exploit human wave tactics(tl note -- google) to obtain victory.

"Oh, so then.....Akatsuki is going to fight alone this time?"

"No. He seems to be fighting alongside his comrades."

The Church of Richard wasn't only this country's religion, but its followers were in nearly every corner of Alayzard. Which of course includes Disdiya and Sherfied as well. On the battlefield there were no lack of believers in the Church of Richard, thus Aleclasta was able to grasp in real time the situation.

Miranda with a laugh,

"Not his so-called comrades that live in Galevain, but his personal friends. If I'm right then they're people Akatsuki brought from his own world."

"Ah..... come to think of it there was an unfamiliar girl at the peace agreement and at the duel with him."

"Yes, besides that young girl there seems to be several others like her."

"If Akatsuki is letting them fight their strength must not be underestimated."

No matter which side, Disdiya or Akatsuki, they were both prepared for an all-out decisive battle. Then Volk spoke in a teasing tone:

"Say Miranda, which side do you think has a greater chance of winning?"

"That goes without saying, no? Your Holiness should also be well aware."

After she said that, out of corners of Miranda's mouth emerged a deep cold smile.

Which side will win this war? Such a thing was a matter of course.

It was not Galevain even with Akatsuki's support. It was not Disdiya, and further it was not Sherfied.

That's right, the real winner will be Aleclasta. The same Aleclasta who took the wait and see approach towards Disdiya's request for cooperation in the war. On the surface they were abiding with the teachings of Church of Richard to avoid meaningless disputes as much as possible.

In fact, this decision fully highlighted the wily old Pope Volk.

If Disdiya wins, Aleclasta was fully prepared to denounce their victory because it was not in line with international justice. It was not only Sherfied that commissioned a third party to re-investigate the annihilation of the surveillance forces. Aleclasta had already obtained their report that hinted at a possible coverup. Even if it was pure speculation of a third country it was enough to change the direction of international public opinion. Not to mention that there were many believers of Church of Richard in Disdiya.

The will of the people for a long time now has been under the control of Aleclasta.

In contrast, if Akatsuki and his companions gained the upper hand, Aleclasta was prepared to step in at the appropriate time to support Disdiya, and even go as far as to play the role of the peacemaker. Once the mediation was successful, the world's perception would have dramatically changed in their favor.

True peace won't be brought about to all the people of Alayzard by the former Hero. It won't be by the militaristic nation that was trying to strike down the demonic race, and neither will it be the non-committal magical country.

Rather it will be through the implementation of an anti-war doctrine that Aleclasta held from start to finish.

"Well..... this war will let the people see their respective future."

The Pope of the Church of Richard Volk Rem Aleclasta IV exposed a proud smile,

"I truly wonder, how many people truly realize the significance of this war."

Part 2

The air was stretched taut.

A silence that would make anyone hold their breath filled the air. The tension was caused by the upcoming battle that would decide the future of Alayzard. Blind to the heavy atmosphere around him, Ousawa Akatsuki stood atop a towering cliff. Dressed in clothes fit for a Demon King he was overlooking the soon to be battlefield of Gorudono Grand Canyon. On the other side of his field of view was Disdiya and Sherfied's allied armies starting to move into formation.

Akatsuki couldn't help but show a fearless smile while staring at such a situation.

"Disdiya about 700,000 maybe even 800,000 troops, while I count only several tens of thousand for Sherfied. I don't want to be hurtful, but unexpectedly the calculating Baram had the audacity to lead his army here."

He laughed,

"Is that all... .. If you plan on killing me you should of brought another million and then maybe you could of tried your luck."

Between the the allied forces and Akatsuki there was a total of three channels. One in the center, one to the north, and one to the south.

The necessary preparations were already in place. Chikage, Kuzuha, Haruka and Kaidou had taken up their positions a long time ago. The four were fully aware of the battle plan, and also understood there was no need to rigidly adhere to their positions.

Akatsuki believed since it was those four they would be able to successfully accomplish their tasks.

Therefore Ousawa Akatsuki grandly declared the war had begun.

"Come, your enemy -- the Demon King is standing right here."

Part 3

Meanwhile, Emperor Baram issued his commands through the use sound amplification magic.

"I, Baram Dy Alon Disdiya hereby order -- All soldiers to begin the military onslaught!"

After receiving the command Disdiya's army sprang into action.

Their vanguards were the first to advance along the central path.

Tens of thousands of soldiers quickly made their way through the small ridge recess on the rugged ground. But their onrush was immediately halted.

Out of nowhere resonated a voice.

"-- I advise you to turn back at once."

The incoming voice was clearly transmitted to the soldier's ears.

"Or else you WILL get hurt."

However, not even one soldier paid head to such a request. 'Whoosh' they all continued on at full speed.

"I'm sorry..... but you were warned."

The voice came from the sky.

"There -- above us."

One of the soldiers yelled out. The squadron immediately focused their attention towards the sky. Floating in mid air was a girl that had several

layers of magic already well underway. And the next moment, an intense sandstorm enveloped the area.

"Attack formations! This storm is nothing to us!"

One of Disdiya's soldiers shouted as he lowered his stance.

"Yeah..... I also think that this level of attack is weak."

The girl coldly stated. In fact, the sandstorm was just a front, the soldiers soon understood what the girl meant. Disdiya's soldiers invariably stopped as painful cries disseminated all around.

"Wah... .. My eyes... ..!"

The naturally rocky terrain at the bottom of the canyon made it impossible to move without opening their eyes. However even if they opened their eyes slightly the incoming sand particles would enter their eyelids blinding them. The soldiers were forced into a painstaking situation.

If they closed their eyes they couldn't see the road, however if they open their eyes they can't see anything. The march was completely stopped, but still the soldiers refused to give up.

"Bear with it... .. This magic can't last forever!"

"Archers aim at the sky. I don't care if your eyes are closed just shoot!"

"Magicians move to the front! Create a barrier to stop the sandstorm!"

The soldier's analysis of the situation was quite accurate, he also made proper judgment. He saw that the sand filling the sky was entering their guns jamming the bolts making them useless. Additionally he took into account that the arrows would easily be affected by the wind, making it impossible hit what they were aiming at. Rather he had them indiscriminately fire a volley to threaten and restrict their target. At the same time he had the idea to use the attack to call forth the magicians, but not to attack. With such poor visibility using magic was quite dangerous. One mistake could have sent the rock walls falling down on them causing massive casualties.

However, the situation did not improve. Although the barrier blocked the sandstorm from reaching them. Sand was already in their eyes making it hard to see. Yet Disdiya's vanguards weren't discouraged. Even if the speed was greatly reduced, they were still able to resume their march.

"-- Much earlier than expected, but I knew this method alone would only go so far."

Even with the loud sandstorm the girl's voice was exceptionally clear.

"Your magicians should have been used to defend from the rear. Sending them to the front was your undoing."

The wind carried the girl's voice to ear's of the tens of thousands of soldiers along the central path. Then suddenly a huge wind storm surpassing one hundred meters per second uprooted Disdiya's soldiers from behind.

Part 4

"Wow.....the Vice president is really amazing."

Chikage Izumi was in charge of guarding the north path. When she saw how the battle was progressing in central path she couldn't help but leak a voice of admiration for her.

Launching a long range spell at the magicians hiding in the back normally would be very troublesome. However, Haruka took advantage of the soil with the sandstorm to lure the magicians to front completely exposing them to the threat of fire. Then she used a powerful storm to blow them away from behind. Still before the attack even started she made air cushion along the rocky wall. This way the enemy that was flung aside at most would just be knocked out and in now way endangering their lives.

"..... However this is no time to praise her."

Chikage turned back to the front. Making use of her AD she summoned a longbow and shot countless water arrows at the tens of thousands of Disdiya's soldiers coming towards her.

"Arrows alone apparently isn't enough"

Chikage focused her consciousness, a huge magic formation appeared in front of her. The dry valley moments ago was engulfed in a flood of muddy water sweeping away the numerous soldiers.

"Rest assured you won't drown. The flood created by my magic was designed so as long the water was in contact with the skin it will allow for oxygen to enter your body without the need for your lungs."

And the flood itself also cushions the soldiers from crashing into the rock wall preventing any serious damage.

..... But then again.

Considering the magic's power and the results, Izumi Chikage can't help but think: regardless if it was Haruka or herself their magical power had significantly increased. For a while after they came to Alayzard everyone

had lost their ability to use magic. It was because the dimensional shift caused their consciousness channel between the body and soul to become unstable, not allowing for a smooth to link to construct magic.

Izumi Chikage was reminded of when she was first summoned to another world and how it took a while for her magic to awaken. Perhaps this situation was the same as last time, and her soul and body were in a precarious state. But perhaps because of the second visit to a different world Chikage and Haruka's magical abilities have recovered and now was a lot stronger than it was before.

And it was not just in terms of brute force, but also things like flexibility and configuration. That was why her flood was able to have "oxygen infiltration" and "protective cushion" attributes added.

.....If I had this power earlier.

Back in JPN Babel, when the cockatrice training program went berserk or when Phil Barnett I would not have ended up blindly thrashed. Also when I was first summoned to the alternate world Banrakua, I could have been able to do more. Even if it wasn't something outrageous like defeating a Demon King and redeeming the entire world like Akatsuki.

However Izumi Chikage doesn't care how she had gained her new power. Since she met Akatsuki and Miu she wanted to get stronger.

So that she was no longer be a burden to the others. Enough power to fight alongside Akatsuki. Enough power to protect Miu and Kuzuha her best friends. Now Chikage could raise her head high, because she was standing together with them facing the enemy.

"..... It makes me happy."



She had a dazzling quiet smile as she once again faced forward.

After the flood waters receded, the bottom of the canyon was clearly visible. And on the valley floor were standing several huge rock walls -- from behind those barriers countless Disdiya's soldiers jumped out.

The armed soldiers thrust out at Chikage at full speed.

But, they only ran a few steps before they all clasped over forward.

"Wh-what's happening.....?"

Seeing their sudden loss of balance and puzzled looks, Chikage smiled as she explained their inner doubts,

"My bad -- I slightly increased the density of oxygen, that's all."

If you inhale concentrated oxygen it will cause severe dizziness, headache, or vomiting. Not only will you be unable to walk, it will also be difficult to concentrate in order to use magic.

-- In the fight against Zahhaku, she removed the hydrogen from the water causing the density of the oxygen in the area to raise allowing it to immediately detonate.

This attack used the same principle.

After she extracted the oxygen she condensed it increasing the concentration around the target.

But it was not as simple as replacing the hydrogen with oxygen. If you assume the hydrogen extraction was the "point", then whole area was the "space", and the difficulty in control was incomparably larger. Moreover, if the oxygen density was too low it will not be effective, and if it was too high it will cause permanent damage to the body.

Only through the complete mastering of her own power was it possible to realize this higher dimensional magic.

Suppressing her ego, Chikage said with a smile,

"-- Well, I think you will get used to after a while."

The smile on her face suddenly turned into a wry smile,

"However, I'm sorry to say..... I can't give you that time to adapt."

As she finished, a large amount of water once again emerge out of thin air mercilessly flushed away Disdiya's soldiers in the torrent.

Part 5

The Disdiyan empire's Emperor Baram was station with the main unit where all the soldiers originally branched off from. He was surveying the battle in the center and north route. Even though both armies were in a bitter battle, Baram's expression remained calm firmly believing everything was going his way.

Magic consumes a lot of energy. And unlike Akatsuki, who has an endless supply of Ki within his body or can replenished it from everything around him, their magic attacks can't go on indefinitely. Furthermore both of them are taking preconditions not to harm any of Disdiya's solders. Naturally, this takes a lot more effort than just going all out. Most likely they were not going to be able to keep this up much longer.

.....Such foolish mimicry.

Baram starred off into the distance at the overhanging cliff were Akatsuki was calmly standing.

In order to realize your worthless ideals, you even involved other people in this messy business.

It's best to keep those eyes wide open -- so you can watch as those two girls die for you.

Balam grunted coldly.

"Your Majesty, there are still many troops than haven't attacked yet. Do you want me to attack from the south?"

The commander of the Royal Knights standing beside him raised a suggestion.

However, Baram shook his head.

"Out of the three routes the south is the most narrow and intricate. We would have to divide our troops up too much causing us lose our superiority. It is not necessary to devote soldiers there. I will leave the south to Sherfied. My army will concentrate on the central and north route only. Send out the order, no matter how fierce their attacks are there is no need to fear. The enemy has no intentions of killing anyone. We will use this to give those who can no longer fight a chance to fall back and recover before being sent back out to the battlefield."

Then he declared in a lower voice.

"Take your time, there's no need to rush. We are fighting a war of attrition, step by step we will force them into a dead end."

Part 6

After a while the battle at the Grand Canyon turned into a stalemate.

Disdiya continued to attack, while Galevain continued to defend.

From the start of the war, both sides have been maintaining one attack and one guard quota.

-- However its been three hours since the fighting began, and this equilibrium was beginning to collapse.

Disdiya's soldiers were gradually braking through Galevain's defensive perimeter set up in the central and northern channel.

".....Sure enough, our numerical advantage is going to be the tie-breaker."

The whole of Gorudono Grand Canyon had yet to completely turn into a battlefield. The south route had not let become a fight.

Sherfied's army was set up in formation around the circumference the south channel. Listy was closely monitoring the activity in the central and north channel.

In the central route, there was the girl who introduced herself as Haruka. She attended the peace agreement and the duel with Akatsuki. And in the northern route, there was a girl they seen for the first time -- perhaps she was also a companion of Akatsuki's like Haruka. Both of them alone were respectively holding off the invasions of tens of thousands of Disdiya's soldiers.

"Those two's power appears to be comparable with us."

"Yes..... and there tactics were able to hold up until now, it is really remarkable."

Standing on the left and right were Loutier and Zechs, who calmly praised the power of those two girls.

But.....

Listy thought: it won't be long before they were overpowered the way things were going. Zechs and Loutier didn't say it, but in their heads they must have the same view.

In fact the performance of the two was absolutely worthy of praise. After all those two alone faced tens of thousands which already wasn't easy, not to mention they also stopped the enemy's attack without killing any of the soldiers. The difficulty of this task was absolutely beyond anyone's imagination.

However, it was impossible for this to continue for eternity.

They appeared to be weary, yet somehow they were still managing to maintain the equilibrium. The moment when that collapses it will only take a split second for Disdiya take hold of this war.

..... But why was Akatsuki not taking any action.....?

Listy was watching him just stand here on top of the cliff.

She believed Akatsuki was already aware of the situation and how detrimental it was to Galevain.

However, since the beginning he remained motionless.

Perhaps this was all part of his plan and then when the time comes -- Listy thought so when.

Suddenly, the Sherfied front line burst into an uproar.

"-- What's going on?"

Zechs returned to the troops under his command in order to report back, but a knight loudly answered first in a perplexed voice.

"It's the enemy, the enemy is attacking! A single attacker came through the southern route, and is engaging with our army!"

"No way.....!?"

More than surprised, Listy subconsciously looked up at the distant cliff.

However, Akatsuki was standing atop the cliff not moving same as before.

It was an unexpected situation. Other than the Akatsuki, she never thought there was a second person who would be this reckless.

What genuinely surprised Listy was not that a single person attack them, rather it was that unbelievably Akatsuki targeted the Sherfied army.

"There is only one of them? Is this idiot trying to end his life!"

Trying to verify the situation, Zechs raised his voice, almost to a roar.

"It is a child! A small and thin girl riding on the back of a lion, no that is a huge Golem!"

"A girl.....?"

"-- This is strange."

Listy couldn't help but frown, beside her Loutier immediately pointed out the unnaturalness of the situation. Everyone thought that the person who matched Akatsuki's degree reckless had to be a warrior much of the same mold as him.

"She is biding her time at the back of the army, but to assign a small girl to infiltrate the enemy ranks.....?"

"Yes, it really doesn't seem like Akatsuki's style."

Maybe that little girl's strength was on par with other two girls defending the other routes. But according to common sense, it was impossible that Akatsuki would leave a little girl to take such a risk. This surely must be part of some plan. However, with all the fighting going on, it was tough to determine Akatsuki's true intention.

"It seems there is no other choice but to directly ask her..... the reason."

"I have the same feeling."

Zechs and Loutier spoke as they stepped forward.

Since the other took the initiative to provoke the war, Sherfied had to keep up rear support.

"Listy, I'll be right back. I'll go have a little chat with that idiot somehow -- even if by force."

"Yes..... I'll leave it to you. Use your own discretion, and do not push yourself too hard."

After returning a nod, Zechs set his sight on Loutier.

"Lulu, that little girl came to challenge you."

"Yes, I am the one responsible for the southern route."

"Very good -- Well then, I will leave it to you grant her Majesty protection."

"Yes, sir."

After the able-bodied second lieutenant nodded, Zechs and Loutier began to run.

As she watched the backs of those two of them leave, Listy El Da Sherfied softly spoke.

"..... Both of you please be careful."

While gazing into the distance she lightly prayed.

"I believe in you -- Akatsuki."

Part 7

After she received the task of standing off against the lone female attacker, Loutier used flight magic so she could rush to the front line as soon as possible.

Before the campaign began Sherfied's officers and soldiers received orders to avoid combat as much as possible. This command was in line with Akatsuki's 'I do not want anyone unfortunate sacrifices in the war' wish.

-- However avoid fighting didn't mean they shouldn't retaliate if attacked, and let them onslaught us.

Since Akatsuki was willing to let this girl alone challenge an enemy's camp, he must have recognized her strength. Therefore an ordinary soldier would be no match for her. Out of Sherfied's faction probably only Listy, Zechs or Loutier could compete with her.

Therefore Loutier Trum used her flight magic. She used a different principle of wind magic to move forward. The auxiliary magic used didn't catch the wind, but rather split the atmosphere in front of her allowing her to rush to the destination without any resistance.

Soon after, the front line came into view.

The soldiers had descended into chaos.

A huge lion huge was running amok, back and forth breaking apart the formation with a small girl on its back. Seeing this Loutier immediately stopped mid-air, and raised her magic gun to the ready.

"Everyone move away from the target! I'm going to fire!"

After receiving Loutier's instructions the Sherfied soldiers scattered in all directions at once, leaving all but one in the empty space. She aimed at the small assailant left in the center and fired.

An ear piercing high-frequency laser beam rang out out of the blue, impartially hitting the target in front of her -- then the huge lion ahead made a beeline for her.

This of course was a warning shot meant to intimidate the other party, but it didn't stop the little girl and the lion.

The lion dashed diagonally forward then jumped atop the steep rock wall. Taking a horizontal posture towards Loutier, and darted away.

.....The girl and the lion have no intention of involving the other soldiers.....?

If she stayed in the canyon mixed in with the other soldiers, naturally Loutier couldn't keep on shooting.

Yet the girl deliberately chose the hard road. Loutier was free to keep shooting at her several more times. The girl moved up and down along the rock face, dodging the incoming shells while continuing to outflank her.

"Uhh... .. There's no way."

Seeing that her shots couldn't stop the girl, Loutier focused her mind.

The magic formation unfolded as she unleashed her magic. Only this was not a magic attack.

What she chanted was a defensive barrier of the highest level.

Moreover it was not used to protect herself.

The barrier was stretch out in front of the lion that was continuing to scamper away. And the next moment -- A loud bang echoed. The lion collided with the transparent wall, not visible to the eye.

The girl that was riding on the back of the lion was thrown into the air because of the momentum.

"-- Argh"

Still, the girl adjusted her posture in the air, and prepared to landed on the ground. Just after she landed the Sherfied soldiers encircled her. Loutier slowly descended from the sky in front of the girl. The girl was petite. In contrast with her giant lion sidekick made her seem even more immature and delicate.

.....It seemed a like overkill.....

Filled with anticipation of meeting the small girl in the front of her, Loutier can't help but smile. This girl alone rushed into the enemy's camp, so she believed that her strength must equal the other two girls defending the central and north path, or maybe even have more ability than them. It seemed that Loutier overestimated her strength. Although the average soldier would be no match for this girl, she wouldn't pose much of a threat to Loutier.

"Are you a fellow of Akatsuki's? You alone jumped into the enemy's camp, you must be up to something. Its a pity but I can't let you plan to succeed."

Loutier composed herself as she told her quietly.

"If you have a letter or message from Akatsuki, please hand it to me directly. I can pass it on, and please get out of here at once. Like Akatsuki as well as your other two fellows attitudes towards the coalition forces, we have no intention of hurting you."

At this time, the girl looked carefully at Loutier.

"Pointed ears, silver hair, plus a magic gun -- Are you Loutier-san?"

"Yes, I am."

Surely she must have heard what she looks like from Akatsuki. Perhaps this girl was trying to confirm whether to trust us. It would have been better if he passed on his message himself, but -- the girl's next words were the exact opposite of what Loutier expected.

"If you know Ousawa-kun then you know how he acts, and I'm sorry but I can't walk away from this."

The reason was simple, the girl goes on to say:

"Because we are just like you -- and to us, there are things which are non-negotiable."

Part 8

In the central route Disdiya's soldiers were gradually pushing up the invasion line.

Facing such a situation Nanase Haruka made a somewhat grave expression.
..... I'm practically being beaten back by them.

The battle in the central channel has been going on for three hours. Haruka was still using magic to attack, while the enemy has been readjusting their countermeasures to it.

Disdiya's soldiers were used to the terrain, since the majority of their country was a desert, and their military was mostly comprised of earth magic users. Haruka's wind magic was on the opposite end of the spectrum. So to speak, they have the worst relationship compatibility with each other. The wind created by her magic was just obstructed by an object they created with their earth magic. The fight began with a sandstorm, strictly speaking this was only meant as a surprise attack. In fact the magical ability of Disdiya to manipulate sand was greater than Haruka's, so long ago her sandstorm magic became ineffective.

The situation grew into a test of who can hold out the longest. She started out with all kinds of various magics to attack, but the enemy quickly adapted to it then started to use their magic to strike back. For some time now both sides have been going all out with their offensives. Haruka needed to break out from this pattern to once more push them back. Through changing her magic with even more different permutations and combinations she could buy more time.

..... At least the number of soldiers were substantially reduced.

However, Disdiya was capable sending the soldiers on the front lines to back in order to rest. Then replaced them with fresh soldiers who could still fight. If it continues like this they will breakthrough Haruka's defensive perimeter when she exhaust's her stamina.

But -- Nanase Haruka was undaunted. She turned her head and glanced up at Akatsuki standing on the cliff.

..... I believe in you.

She thought the strategy he came up with beforehand was worthy of trust. Therefore, all she had to do was defend the battlefield until her physical strength and energy runs out.

That was what she secretly swore in her heart as she turned her head back forward. Then suddenly out of the corner of her eye was a shadow.

"-- Huh?"

Unlike the rest of Disdiya's soldiers at the bottom of a ravine he was running on top of the cliffs.

..... When on earth did he appear?

Nanase Haruka was unable to hide her inner agitation. She knew the identity of that person. He was the Crimson sword king of Sherfied and his target was obvious. He was running on top the cliffs headed for Akatsuki. She had seen his strength in action during the duel.

She knew that the present situation was very dangerous, but had to keep her emotions in check.

"Come down here and face me!"

Haruka immediately concentrated her mind unleashing a magic formation, an intense tornado was created out of the wind. The tornado ran along the mountain walls keeping parallel with the horizon meant to hit Zechs.

Part 9

Even after Zechs discovered the tornado quickly approaching he didn't stop.

He chose to intercept it rather than dodge. Pulling out his crimson long sword from its sheath, in a flash he slashed vertically. The wind created from the edge of blade bisected the approaching tornado from top to

bottom. As Haruka watched it happen, she readied a second wave as fast as she could.

-- Too slow."

There wasn't enough time for her to use magic again. She could only watch as Zechs jumped onto the cliff.

On the other side of the cliff stood a youth. That youth was none other than Ousawa Akatsuki smiling confidently. As soon as Zechs landed he dashed towards Akatsuki.

"Uuurrrrraaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!"

He shortened the distance in an instant, wielding the crimson sword he sliced straight down.

No tricks, he just swung straight down from overhead. However -- Akatsuki didn't move.

"-----!"

A hairs breath away Zechs had stopped his blade.

Confronted with Zechs slash, Akatsuki didn't move a muscle, he didn't even bat an eyelash.

-- But this wasn't from an absolute confidence he could react in time.

Of course, this was also not a situation in which he was convinced Zechs would stop his sword either.

"What..... the....."

Zechs mumbled as he groaned, then he turned his right wrist sideways smashing the sword hilt into Akatsuki's head. Straightway he collapsed over -- the split second he hit the ground his body broke apart into countless fragments.

It was an earth puppet. Unlike ordinary Golems, its makeup was fundamentally different as it focused on toughness.

The elaborate puppet's color and texture were flawless, it look no different from Akatsuki himself.

..... What the hell, since when?

Zeks Doltrake now believed since the beginning of the fight, from the moment the two forces crossed swords it was just a puppet standing there. Then that means -- Akatsuki didn't intend to fight from the start? No, there was no way he would have run away.

"That bastard.....!"

Zechs looked back at the battlefield behind him.

There was no doubt, at this very moment -- Akatsuki was somewhere on the battlefield.

Part 10

-- It was just an earth puppet made to look like Akatsuki on top of the cliff.

The information shocked all the troops in the Gorudono Grand Canyon. The enemy had lost sight of their primary objective, shaking the morale of the soldiers. Even as far away as the southern channel, Loutier Trum was greatly affected.

"Akatsuki is missing.....?"

Loutier glared at the small girl she was facing off against, and wrinkled her brows --

"Nope, I'm right here."

A familiar sounding voice reached her ear.

"-----!"

Loutier failed to react right away to the significant change in the situation.

The surrounding soldiers of Sherfied all fainted together, softly they fell to ground. Now it was Loutier Trum's turn to be surprised.

"You, when did you....."

It wasn't a word but a fearless smile that answered her trembling comment.

He was in front of her eyes, before she was even aware -- Ousawa Akatsuki was calmly standing next to that young girl.

Part 11

Akatsuki was spotted in the southern route.

The news immediately reached Baram's ears, who was with Disdiya's main force.

"Swordsmen and magical squads, head for the south!"

The Royal Knight's standing next to Baram gave the orders. It was a reasonable assessment.

"Hold -- That won't be necessary."

However, Baram indifferently withdrew their orders and --

"Command the artillery to fire on the North."

".....Huh? But the enemy's magic has caused a sharp rise in oxygen concentration of the northern channel. Once the shelling hits the region it might trigger large scale explosions."

"Yes, that is what I'm hoping for. That Akatsuki guy has appeared in the south. That means it will take that guy some time to reach the Northern channel for support. This is our best chance to wipe out the enemy in the north."

"But the damage to our army..... at the very least let me send a messenger, so they can set up a protective barrier --"

"No, doing so might alert the enemy. Just because the enemy does not want to kill. You must not forget the very nature of war. Listen well, war is cruel, and part of that is some sacrifices are inevitable."

Baram Dy Alon Disdia very calmly said,

"After the explosions and the landslides stabilize command the rear forces to move in -- OPEN FIRE!"

Emperor Baram ordered the the dozens of artillery to fire, simultaneously.

A few seconds later --

Explosions razed the northern route, the ensuing shock waves caused every inch of Gorudono Grand Canyon to quake.

Part 12

The area around the intense explosions was scorched black, the force of impact caused the nearby walls to cave in. Immense boulders crashed to the ground stirring up a sand cloud that wrapped around the whole area, masking the entire length of the north channel.

-- And when the sand cloud dispersed the tragic reality of war appeared.

It was quiet, as if formerly fierce battle never occurred. All that was left was a mass of rubble. Nobody was able to respond in time to the sudden explosion or to the collapse. The girl was focused on the tens of thousands of troops, while Disdiya's soldiers were desperately fighting with the girl.

No matter which side, they both were caught surprised and crushed under the rock slide.

Even though the north route was buried in rubble the war was still not over.

"Hey -- Do we start looking?"

When the sand cloud settled Disidiy\'s soldiers on the back line begun to search the scene.

Their priority certainly wasn't searching for their own survivors, but to confirm the death of the enemy. They used their earth magic to rapidly clear away the rubble. And after a little while they found her.

"Found her -- She's here!"

Under the piles of rubble they were amazed to find the girl lying there unmoving. The girl's body was covered in mud, however there was no blood on her clothes. It seemed she escaped the worst death scenario and wasn't crushed to death by the falling rocks, but still she wasn't lucky enough to survive the bombardment. However for the sake of caution, one of the soldiers reach out to check her pulse and confirm her fate. When he touched the nape of her neck, the girl's body instantly disintegrated, and turned it into a pile of dirt.

"Eh.....!"

The soldiers were stunned and didn't understand what just had happened, however they did not have time to think about it.

Suddenly a column of water gushed out from beneath ground and transmogrified into a huge dragon swallowing all the soldiers in the immediate area.

"Th-that is impossible....."

The soldiers fortunate enough to escape the attack clearly saw that same girl riding on the water dragon's back.

"Sorry -- I wont be brought down that easily by you."

"How, how is....."

The soldiers who witnessed the girl's wry smile could hardly believe their eyes. They were incapable of defeating the enemy. That inescapable fact stupefied each and every one of the soldiers. A deep sense of despair also set in. The reason was simple, the enemy was not alone anymore. On the water dragon's back sat at least twenty girls. If those twenty girls were just comrades who rushed over to help, Disdiya's soldiers wouldn't have been

as surprised. But the problem was -- not only did the girls on the water dragon's back all dress the same, they all looked exactly alike.

-- What did all that mean?

The first girl who turned into a pile of dirt said it all.

"All that effort to take down just one, but it was just....."

But, there was no answer, more they didn't want to give an answer. Because they did not want to admit it.

After spending several long hours, and at the expense of countless fellow soldiers being struck down by the enemy. It was just an imitation made from the ground.

Part 13

"That was a masterpiece of yours I take it."

After learning of the situation to the north, Loutier looked at the girl standing next to the Akatsuki.

The petite girl nodded to confirmed her speculation.

"Yes..... that was my magic which created the "puppet." I used one of her hairs as a medium to make to her the master. That way it will move according to her will, but also allows her to use her magic through the medium."

After learning the secret, Loutier muttered:

"Then -- All of the girls."

That was to say, that girl Haruka fighting in the central route was also merely a puppet. Loutier thought it had to be the case.

"Yes..... the real girls are safe far away from here."

The girl then place her hand on her chest and revealed she was a puppet herself.

.....No wonder her strength was below expectations.

Loutier finally understood why when compared to the girls in central and north channel, the girl sitting on the back of that lion was clearly inferior. But it was only natural, after all she had to maintain the shape of Akatsuki's elaborate earth puppet the whole time, and also create a puppet for other girls as well as one for herself. However, the twenty girls on the water dragon's back shouldn't all be puppets able to use magic. No matter how

abundant her magic was, there should be limit to the amount of puppets she can maintain at the same time. So there should be only one real puppet, and the rest were just camouflage to distract the enemy.

"Yup, I think you should already be aware that we really don't intend to kill anyone in this war."

Akatsuki broke the silence with his smile, and slowly started to explain the truth behind this battle.

"You know me -- how could I let a woman face such danger instead of going myself?"

After hearing what Akatsuki said, Loutier could not help but feel the same way. That certainly might be true. Also earlier when she heard that a girl charged in alone, it didn't seem at all like Akatsuki's style.

Her inner doubt at long last was answered.

Then.....

..... Why did Akatsuki appear here?

The girl said that a hair was used as a medium in the puppets so that the magical power of that person could pass through. And that it was her earth magic that created them, but Akatsuki cannot use magic. Even if his Ki was in the hair for example, its very essence was different from the magic.

Theoretically it should be impossible to create a puppet

In other words -- that was not a puppet in front of her, but Akatsuki himself.

However, the girl was still just a puppet there was no need for Akatsuki to protect her. In that case, what reason did he have to be here? The key to ending this war was stopping Baram. Then shouldn't he be targeting Disdiya's main unit, and not here. But he choose not to do that, and now was in south which was not as strategically important.

"-- Is it really that big of a mystery why I'm here?"

It seemed that he read Loutier's mind.

"Do you still not get it, Lulu?..... Think about what is right here."

Then Akatsuki smiled and said, "Then let me tell you" while laughing. When he finished talking, Akatsuki silhouette suddenly vanished.

"-----!"

Loutier tried to take up a stance as she panicked. Akatsuki appeared silently beside her, and place his hand on her shoulder.

"My target, Lulu..... is you."

The instant that sentence passed her ears, Loutier felt a slight prick on the neck. Her consciousness was immediately wrapped in a dark vortex.

Part 14

Akatsuki had made a move.

Without damaging Loutier a light chop deprived her of consciousness. He took the unconsciousness high elf lightly into his arms, and then looked to Kuzuha.

"Well then Class Rep..... just as planned, take Lulu back with you to Forestnium as quickly as possible."

Ousawa Akatsuki calmly said,

"This guy is a priestess that specializes in high level recovery magic. Lulu will surely be able to heal Riruru."

"Un, no problem....."

Kuzuha's puppet crumbled as she nodded, and transmogrified into a lion golem.

This was definitely the fastest way to carry her back to Forestnium.

-- The ultimate goal of this battle was to have her treat the seriously injured Riruru. This the was a promise to Kuzuha, also Akatsuki's own desire. That was why, this particular battle plan was drawn up. The plan was to pin down Disdiya in both the central and north channel by deliberately picking that conspicuous location to attract their attention. He even let Kuzuha storm into the Sherfied camp alone. All of her actions were to lure out the Chief Executive of Sherfied and then capture her.

Akatsuki laid the unconscious Loutier on the earth golem lion's back.

"Be careful on the way back..... this guy is a cherished companion of mine."

The Lion nodded as to convey its understanding. Then turned around to hurry back down the south channel she came from. At that rate she should reach Forestnium in no time.

Therefore Akatsuki thought to himself that he accomplished one of the goals of the operation.

"Well, I guess its about time for me to act."

After muttering, Akatsuki jumped. The second objective -- was to devastate Disdiya's army.

Akatsuki jumped around seven or eight meters back and forth between the rock walls until he reach the precipice. Then immediately headed in the direction of the central channel.

"-- Vice president!"

After hearing him call out to her, Haruka turned back while still floating mid-air a little ways away.

Akatsuki nodded -- indicating the first phase of the operation was successful.

"----"

Her face lightened momentarily as she returned a nod. She altered her active magic in place in the central route. She lowered the protective wind cushion on the rock walls before casting it anew. Haruka then left her post at the central route, and flew to the northern route ready to support Chikage in her battle. So far, it was all going accordingly to their original plan.

However, there were still soldiers remaining in a central route. But who was going to deal with residual enemies? That answer was obvious. Therefore, Akatsuki Ousawa jumped down from the top of the cliff.

He landed at the bottom of the ravine with a loud bang -- In the middle of the central route.

"Ah-----!"

It was like the heaven God general descend. The soldiers one by one flinched and retreated backwards, unable to hide their inner fear.

Akatsuki informed them with a fearless smile.

"Eh, what are you hiding for?..... The Demon King you guys are looking for is right in front your face."

After saying so, he took a step forward.

"Akatsukiiiiiii --"

The thunderous shout to Akatsuki descended behind him from Zechs Doltrake. He found this place after he destroyed the earth puppet of Akatsuki from atop the cliff, and jump down right after. However, Akatsuki didn't look back.

-- Then.

A high-pitched metallic sound screeched as Zeche's blade was stopped before it hit Akatsuki's body. Between the two, a young man stepped in dividing them.

"-- Eh!"

Zeche quickly jumped back, opening up some distance.

The young man took up a defense posture as he crossed knuckle armor on both hands.

"Aha... you see that Akki? Not just anybody can appear at a crucial moment like that."

"Surely you jest. Up until now, what have you been doing, eating or sleeping? Huh, so it is possible for you to put in some work."

"Gee thanks. That habit of yours, really. Akki you don't have to go Tsundere."

"Hey, Kaidou --"

He informed Kaidou who was joking around, while looking straight ahead in a serious tone.

"-- I will leave this guy to you."

"Ah, no problem."

After the short conversation ended, their backs were facing each other.

Akatsuki summoned his black Demon sword, and took a step forward.

To Disdiya's tens of thousands of soldiers he loudly announced:

"Time is of the essence, so I'll make this quick. Are you ready -- because I wait for no man."

Part 15

The sounds of weapons clashing and cry's of Disdiya's soldiers continuously began to grow in the background.

"..... And now."

Kaidou Motoharu focused all his attention to the front again, staring into Zeche's eyes.

"You prefer to have a showdown with Akki, huh? Unfortunately, I can't allow that."

"Ha", then he smiled,

"Too bad, now its my turn -- Whoa!"

Kaidou didn't have time to finish speaking. He had to quickly twist his head to the side. The crimson blade went past the tip of his nose, severing several of the hairs covering his forehead.

"Eeeh, scary..... You should at least wait until I'm done talking, okay?"

"You're just a puppet, anyway. I don't have time to waste on you."

Zechs coldly snorted, "punpun" Kaidou waved his head angrily.

"Gimme a break, I am the real thing! You almost cut off my head. I would of died!"

Kuzuha's power was limited, she could only have three active puppets at one time. Therefore Akatsuki assigned them to Haruka, Chikage and to Kuzuha herself. Naturally, Kaidou was left out and had to go into battle with his real flesh and blood body.

"If your afraid to die..... you had better withdraw quickly."

Zechs indifferently said so,

"Otherwise, I'm not going go to easy on you -- Gah!"

However, it wasn't possible for him to say his whole piece, because Kaidou beat him to the punch. Even if his body had on a layer of armor, it failed to stop the heavy blow sending him skidding backwards for some distance.

"Arrgghhhh, are you kidding me? Your the one who complained about my sneak attack when you where talking. Ahhh, why am I'm talking so carefree --"

Kaidou laughed.



「舐めてるのはどっちだ……そんな丸腰で、俺とやるつもりか？」
「仕方ねえだろ……任されちまったんだからよ」

"--Oh, you didn't take me seriously, did you?"

"I don't know who's more contemptuous Unarmed and you still want to go toe to toe with me?"

As saying so, Zechs lifted the crimson sword once again. Kaidou upon seeing this, couldn't help but sigh:

"There's nothing that can be done..... because I was entrusted by the people."

His expression became serious.

"And was responsible for protecting the children. I was careless and let one of the children get hurt. Once is enough for this type of lesson, there won't be a second time."

"I see..... since neither one of us is going to back down. It can not be helped then."

Zechs seemed to have resolved himself,

"I do not have time to fight with anybody other than Akatsuki -- prepare yourself."

As soon as he finished saying so he stabbed towards Kaidou.

"Ah..... Tch!"

Kaidou was dodging left and right, barely escaping the continuous slashes.

Zechs's assault was rather sharp, forcing him to use his AD summon knuckles to defend. He was able to stop the first attack on Akatsuki because it was an attack at his back so Zechs wasn't giving it his all. He was also reminded that Zechs announced his presence aloud to Akatsuki was all the more proof.

But that wasn't the case now, every sword strike had in it his best effort. And this was far from a favorable situation, since they were only separated by no more than an arms length.

"Your good at running away..... it's top notch."

"Well, it's not like I want to die."

Zechs sarcastically praise him, while Kaidou's answer was also very frivolous.

Although Zechs's sword was sharp his intent was not to kill Kaidou.

..... Amazing.

Kaidou couldn't help but feel admiration. Even if his slash were to hit, it probably wouldn't draw blood. At best he would suffer a fracture or lose consciousness.

Western-style swords have an edge on both sides, so there was no so-called back of the knife. Making it impossible not to cut the enemy, but Zechs had the skill of a master -- thus avoiding a killing blow. If Kaidou stopped dodging, Zechs was sure to sever only his consciousness with a blow. Under these circumstances, it might be more dangerous if he were to avoid the attack unskillfully.

Naturally with his knuckle armor he should attack with his fists, and avoid kicking as much as possible.

..... But I can't lie down here.....

After all, Akatsuki left the mission of handling Zechs to me.

And I took on this myself, and I should at least contribute a little.

Therefore Kaido Motoharu went on a counterattack. Simultaneously,

"Gah--!"

Suddenly, Zechs's body was blown back from a powerful impact felt on his side from the empty space.

After landing awkwardly, Zechs stared at him.

"An invisible attack..... Physical magic?"

"What do you think?"

Kaidou smiled nonchalantly.

"Don't worry too much. When you figure it out, you would've already been defeated by me."

Just as he finished speaking, Kaidou carried out a long range attack.

A series of invisible attacks came upper and lower, front and back, and left and right, in all directions. However,

"Tch.....!"

Zechs swung his sword, used nimble footwork, and twisted his body to avoid Kaidou's offensive.

"Oh, amazing!..... you really did that, eh."

He most likely did that by observing Kaidou's breathing and line of sight to predict the direction to some degree and the timing of the attacks. Kaidou

had heartfelt praise for him. It must be his way of compensating for his handicap of not being able to use magic.

"With that move you would be able to deal with most opponents. It is definitely more than enough and to spare."

Kaidou laughed, but unfortunately he was not most opponents.

"It's regrettable -- but I have already encountered a fellow that could read breathing and sight to predict attacks."

Kaidou changed the way he attacked to a tactic specifically designed to combat people like him. To put it bluntly, it was to alter your own breathing and used your line of sight as a feint to deceive the enemy.

His new approach was effective. Zechs's body was left open to a barrage of attacks, gradually slowing him down.

".....Ga... .. ahhh!?"

"Wow..... you were able to avoid some of those shots, huh. Is that like some sort of sixth sense gained from all your experience?"

However the situation developed to this point, Kaidou had gained the upper hand. Although Zechs's swordsmanship was unrivaled, his weak point was his inability to use magic. Where Kaidou was concerned, there was already nothing for him to fear from Zechs.

.....He seems to be a friend of Akatsuki's so it would be best to knock him out quickly.

Right when Kaidou was ready to give the final blow --

"-- Don't underestimate me."

A low voice accompanied by high-pitched sonic boom was heard by Kaidou. Not good!

Kaidou subconsciously dodged to the right, the rock behind him was suddenly split in two. The cross section was cut to a shine. Kaidou distorted his face as he squeamishly and unintentionally let out a "Ga".

"It's unfortunate..... but as a swordsman, I also have a long range invisible attack."

After fixing his sword stance, Zechs coldly reported.

Kaidou understood that just a moment ago, he used a lightning fast sword slash indiscernible to the naked eye. The high-pitched sonic boom was a byproduct of the sword taking the shape of wind and exceeding the speed of sound.

"Let's try it, your attack and my sword -- Which will be faster?"

Zeche raised his sword again.

"Eh..... The situation has reversed?"

Confused, Kaidou scratched his cheek, and felt a wet sensation on the tip of his index finger.

On closer look, it was a bright red liquid -- blood.

"Oh....."

Kaidou abruptly narrowed his eyes, harboring a dangerous color in his pupils.

He laughed.

"Quite interesting -- Well then, I'll play seriously with you."

Part 16

Zeche Doltrake clearly felt the significant change in atmosphere.

The reason was obvious. The youth before him was suddenly emitting a intense aura.

.....A prolonged fighting was..... very disadvantageous for me.

Zeche didn't understand the true character of the enemy's attack. Therefore he couldn't fully anticipate the enemy's next attack. But, it was impossible for the opposite party to dodge his supersonic sword strike. His best chance would be a preemptive attack before his opponent could do anything.

..... That said, I don't want to accidentally kill him.

Zeche tightly gripped the handle of the sword, the blade faintly shined crimson. It's the shine of a magic sword. Once he brandishes the sword now it will cut the enemy -- Zeche's will was in direct action to other party's spirit, that was being aimed at him.

The attack will penetrate through all magical defensive barriers. Since Zeche was unable to use magic this was the reason why he won fame throughout Alayzard as the Crimson Sword King.

So -- the first to act will be the victor.

"Take this--!"

Along with the shout, he swung the crimson long sword. In an instant the force emitted would reach the other party, and his consciousness would be severed --

But.....

"Giiiiiiin!"

There was a harsh metallic crash, Zechs's sword was stuck mid-air.

"-----Eh?"

Zechs was surprised. His sword had been stopped before the attack was released. His right hand strongly felt a reaction, the feeling of being blocked.

And the next moment --

"Gah..... This is.....?"

He lost all control over his body, and collapsed to the ground. Then he noticed the abnormal condition of his body and what had actually happened. An invisible attack hit him. In addition to the one that caught his sword -- the true character was not physical magic.

"This is..... a chain?"

"--Correct answer!"

As he said so, the young man snapped his fingers.

The object coiled around Zechs's body became visible, a silver chain.

"Not too bad -- For your country, you wanted to win at any cost just to fight Akki."

The young man laughed as he said so. Zechs couldn't believe what he just heard.

"After all, you intend to lose to Akki on purpose, right?"

".....!"

Zechs was left speechless, because nobody knew of his plan. He never said one word of it to anyone.

As a General of Sherfied, he has always been a spiritual pillar for the soldiers. If he were defeated, the soldiers would have definitely lost their confidence. Then his defeat could have been used as an excuse for Sherfied's retreat. At the same time would also prove Akatsuki's power. Akatsuki planned to show off his overwhelming power to Disdiya forcing them to agree to a cease-fire, and sending them back to the peace treaty negotiations table. Zechs's plan was undeniably secretly helping Akatsuki.

It was the reason he persisted on a showdown with Akatsuki.

"But now you don't have to go through all the trouble. The Queen's right hand, the high elf, is now our prisoner. This alone constitutes sufficient grounds for a retreat."

"Don't tell me..... that bastard already knew what I was thinking?"

"It might not of been like that. Otherwise I wouldn't have been left to deal with you."

After a short pause.

"-- I see, so you have come here."

Just as he finished speaking, the youth jumped back several steps at once.

Then, innumerable wind blades pierced the place where the youth previously stood.

"No way.....!"

The Zechs looked up at the sky. Just to check who it was that flown here from the south route by magic. He was amazed to find it was Listy with her magical wand in hand.

"You idiot.....! What are you doing here!"

Anxious and irritation filled Zechs's heart as he criticized Listy, who landed right in front of him.

"I was going to ask you what you were doing! Did I not tell you? Not to overdo it!"

Listy mercilessly scolded Zechs. The young man who he was fighting with had already disappeared. Listy looked around anyway just to make sure the enemy left, and wasn't somewhere overlooking Zechs.

"Let me see now, how I can help you with this chain--"

"Ahhh, I'm sorry..... it's impossible to break the chain."

Suddenly, a voice of the young man rang out of thin air.

Zechs listened to the young man speak along with Listy.

"But don't worry, given a little time it will fade away."

Well.....

"Oh, by the time the chain disappears the fighting should be over."

Part 17

After Nanase Haruka left the fighting quickly came to an end in the central channel.

Ousawa Akatsuki ran through the lot in merely ten minutes.

Seeing the disparity of power between the two sides, the remnants of the Disdiyan army temporary retreated.

Within that short period of time, Akatsuki succeeded in suppressing most of the central channel.

"Hmm, what to do now....."

Akatsuki had his <Demon sword> over his shoulders, as he thought to himself.

The remainder of the Disdiya's forces were in the north route and back with the main unit. Should he go straight to the north to support Chikage, or directly rush into the their main force to end this war as soon as possible?

..... As a precaution I had better take a look at the situation in the north.

Ousawa Akatsuki make his decision on the spot and put it straight into action.

"Oh wow, this is amazing eh--"

A carefree voice came from behind. Looking back, Kaidou was standing there with his hands joined together behind his head. He was looking at countless soldiers, who fainted after they were blown away into the right and left rock walls.

"I wish I did it as flashy. Not only are they all consciousness, they are littered everywhere. I can't get through except where Akki has passed. Is this the matchless skill of Moses?"

"Nah, this was nothing..... I just ran through."

Akatsuki laughed.

"--Did you settle it?"

"Ah, that redheaded general wont be able to move for a while. Not long after that Queen arrived to pick him up. It shouldn't be too much longer before they leave the battlefield."

".....I see."

Since Zechs and Listy were together there was nothing to worry about. If it was only one person, it was hard to say if they would act on impulse, but since its two people then things were different. After all, one person's

selfishness would also trouble the other, consequently they would be less likely to jeopardized the other. So as long as the two of them were together, it can be expected that they would curb each others reckless behavior.

.....There won't be a need them to fight any further.....

So from this point on it will be Akatsuki's fight.

"Okay, let's go."

As he said that Akatsuki was ready to go when an intense bang with a fierce roar shook Gorudono Grand Canyon. The repetitive deep bass was blasting the atmosphere.

"Akki this is....."

"Ah, the north -- I'm going."

After the brief conversation, Akatsuki and Kaidou took turns kicking off the footholds on the left and right sides of the mountain walls. At the top of the cliff they left as fast as they could to the north channel.

After Akatsuki and Kaidou arrived at the scene, they looked down from cliffs they were standing overlooking the bottom of valley in the north route. The fighting had ended, there were no signs of the puppets that Haruka and Chikage were manipulating.

Or any traces of Disdiya's soldiers that were fighting.

With the exception of one person -- a knight in golden armor was standing there.

.....That surely was the guy.....

Akatsuki knew who he was by his appearance. Undoubtedly he was the knight that was beside Alphonse and Baram at the peace negotiations.

"Akki, that's the guy."

In a quiet voice Kaidou called out. Akatsuki was already told everything.

That was the knight who was the originator of the tragedy in Forestnium. Then it seemed the knight heard Kaidou's voice as he raised his head to looked to the top of the cliff. With the height difference of several tens of meters separating them they were able to recognize each other.

Even so -- a clash was inevitable.

"..... I finally found you."

Akatsuki clenched his fists.

..... It was you ... you ...!

The one who killed Urumu, and wounded Riruru. Who made Miu and Kuzuha cry. Who put Sherfied, Listy, and the others in this predicament. The peace that we all aimed for -- it was all trampled by his cowardly actions.

"Kaidou..... Don't lay a finger on him."

A low voice that naturally came out, then Akatsuki drew his magical black sword, and took a step forward.

"I'll smash the bastard."

And at the same time as he said so he kick off the ground towards the bottom of the ravine.

While nosediving at the armor Knight, Akatsuki raised the black sword.

Without any petty tricks. He increased his body's physical strength through renkan keikikou, and used the momentum of the fall to form an attack at the maximum limit of his power.

Gravity accelerated the fall, the distance between him and armor Knight shortened in one breath.

"Uuurrrrraaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhh--!"

Akatsuki put everything he had in the sword strike.

However, the Knight took up a stance intending to take the attack head on.

-- He just casually raised his sword with one hand, and swung it horizontally.

"Gakiiiiiiiiiiiiin!"

「だからなつてやるよ……お前を倒せる俺に」



After the deafening noise of the impact the earth was depressed around the armor Knight. The destructive power in Akatsuki's slash was obviousness, based on the aftermath it gave birth to.

But.....

"With one hand, huh....."

After their swords crossed, Akatsuki stared at armor Knight.

He thought that no one would have been able to stop that attack, but the Knight block it easily.

Akatsuki heard how powerful the enemy was from Kaidou and Kuzuha. Therefore he did not think he would beat him with one blow. However, Akatsuki was using both hands while he only used one to wield a sword that blocked him. Besides withstanding the power in the strike, he even resisted the fall and did not move an inch. These signs prove one thing, the other party knows full well about the power of his renkan keikikou.

"....."

The armor Knight silently waved his sword tossing both Akatsuki along with his sword back. Akatsuki regained his balance in the air, smoothly landing on the ground.

At the same time, the ground where he landed was destroyed by the armor Knight's wave shot from his sword slash. He used his magic sword to fend off the attack, then he sent out a shock wave to disperse the sand cloud that filled the air. Followed by a dash cutting the distance, and stabbed at the knight. However, it was also blocked easily by the Knight.

"-- Take this!"

As the blades hit Akatsuki used them as a fulcrum, lifting his body to the side allowing his right leg to be kicked out.

Hitting the side of the armor Knight's head.

"Bakii" along with the sound of hitting metal the armor Knight staggered to his left. The shock wave caused by the kick should of penetrated the armor, and surly rocked his brain. Akatsuki was confident it was a solid hit.

How..... he started to say, but Akatsuki swallowed his words. The armor Knight not only did not fall, but instead reached out and grabbed Akatsuki's right foot slamming him into the ground.

"Gaaaaah"

The strong impact felt on his back caused him to momentary stop breathing, followed by an intense pain. However, there was no time to rest,

because the armor Knight swung his sword straight down at his lower body.

"--Damn!"

Akatsuki avoided it by rolling to the side, he barely escaped the danger. Taking advantage of force to stand up to swing the demon sword horizontally.

The resulting rush of air shot out, but it missed the target because the Knight had disappeared. Akatsuki subconsciously looked up.

He found the enemy standing in a small cave half way up the rock wall.

"Son of a....."

Akatsuki glared at the armor Knight who in-turn responded by taking action. He turned his back to Akatsuki, and slashed at the rock wall. After a shrill sound, a huge v-shaped crack quickly spread on the wall. After a moment of silence, the cave's ceiling began to give way above the Knight's head accompanied with a bang similar to sound of an earthquake. In face of the rapidly approaching rockslide the armor Knight raised his sword continuously hacking apart the rocks.

The falling rocks where turned into countless smaller ones and poured down on Akatsuki.

However.....

"--Hey, Did you read this from a textbook?"

Akatsuki laughed as he looked up at the falling rocks.

He jumped up with his magic sword in hand, and crushed the rocks coming at him. While he look for other rocks to grab a foothold to slowly climb up. Just as Akatsuki cut through an enormous rock -- the armor Knight suddenly attacked from the front.

"Another textbook move!"

This attack came as no surprise to Akatsuki. He received the attack with his demon sword. The two of them used the falling rocks around them to get footholds on. Using the rocks the battlefield became three-dimensional as they freely tried to cut each other.

The roar of the rock's crashing into the ground one after another was the BGM, while their swords crossed over and over again.

-- Akatsuki's attacks began to gradually overwhelm the armor Knight.

"Is this all you have? Come at me again!"

Akatsuki's sword strikes were holding the armor Knight at bay. At first the Knight's strength greatly puzzled him, but it was well within the range he could cope with. The other could only use his one sword to attack, while Akatsuki could still use both his hands and feet to fight. As formidable of an enemy he was, it was difficult for him to fight against Akatsuki's ever changing patterns of attacks.

It was just --

.....Strange?

Akatsuki suddenly had a indescribable feeling. He always felt that something was amiss -- but didn't know what it was. His heart started to beat faster and faster, a sinking feeling came over him. Like the time when Phil Barnett turned his body into the evil dragon Zahark. The same sense of impending crisis.

Just when two swords crossed once again.

.....! Is this guy --!

After he become aware of this feeling, Akatsuki could not help but hesitate.

However, right this moment he was in the middle of a battle and it was beyond his control at this point.

"Woo oh oh oh oh --!"

With a roar the black demon sword was forcibly swung, the armor Knight was tossed backward along with Akatsuki. The Knight straightened his stance mid-air avoiding the falling rocks, then rushed to get the ground one step faster than Akatsuki.

Akatsuki chased after him. The two men returned their fight back to the ground.

Part 18

Standing on top of a cliff Kaidou Motoharu was watching the fight between Akatsuki and the armor Knight.

After they resumed their fight on the ground it only intensified.

Judging from both sides, attacks and defense, that he saw, Kaidou calmly believed Akatsuki had the edge.

But.....

..... His fighting style seemed to have changed.....?

From where he was, Kaidou could see Akatsuki continuing to wave his Demon sword. But something didn't feel right to Kaidou about the way he was moving his body. Kaidou had witnessed several of his fights up till now including the one at JPN Babel school's ranking tournament when Akatsuki and the others were ambushed by three of the student council members, excluding Hikami Kyoya. And then the fight with the high dimensional dragon. Even in that one, Akatsuki won in the end.

But he did not notice until a little while ago, that Akatsuki now was showing less confidence and ease with his body.

And now that they were back on the ground -- he wasn't acting like his usual self.

..... That bastard in the armor was indeed a powerful enemy sure, but --

Kaidou couldn't help but suspiciously say:

"Come on Akki..... this is nothing like your usual style."

Part 19

"Gaaaaaa --!"

After blocking a flurry of slashes Akatsuki jumped back, putting space between them.

He stared at the armor Knight in front of him, trying to calmly judged the situation.

.....That bastard was gradually getting used to my attacks.

Even thought Akatsuki was the first to familiarize himself with other's movements, now he was gradually picking up on Akatsuki's patterns. The reasons were obvious enough, Ousawa Akatsuki thought.

.....There's no other way than.

Akatsuki secretly made a wry smile in his mind, and also a decision. So he looked at the armor Knight before quietly telling him:

"Apparently, as it stands now I can't beat you --"

Akatsuki was confident in his own judgment. And,

"For me to defeat you..... I just need to become stronger."

At the same time he said so his body began to emit a dazzling light.

Overflowing from his body was a torrent of Ki.

This was the same move Akatsuki used during the duel with Listy and the others, using renkan keikikou he was able to exceed the limits of his body. Taking into account the condition he would be in following the battle Akatsuki didn't plan of using this in the first place, because of great burden it puts on the body. However the immediate situation left him no other choice.

"This is the only way to defeat you."

The powerful Ki gushed out from his whole body as Akatsuki faintly smiled. And,

"Ready --"

Akatsuki bent his knees and lowered his waist, sprinting ahead like a shooting star rapidly approaching the armor Knight. Godspeed was the only way to describe it. The distance was shorten in an instant. He was holding the demon sword up high as he swung it straight down.

A strike that could kill in one hit.

Then, in the middle of his swing.

".....Do you really want to do that?"

Ousawa Akatsuki clearly heard the armor Knight's voice.

"-- That person is watching."

"--?"

The Knight's sudden words stopped him for a moment at which he stared blankly. At the same time gave him a chance to look out from the corner of his eye to see "that person." His hesitation left the black sword immobile half way in the air.

"Damn --!"

Akatsuki realized he was still in the middle of swinging down the black demon sword, however the armor Knight showed no signs moving.

And then -- the shadows of two people interlaced them.

Part 20

Listy by chance happen to get there at that precise moment.

After the chain binding Zechs disappeared. Drawn by the sounds of an intense fight, she headed north. Allowing her to see with her own eyes Akatsuki and Knight in golden armor -- at the exact second the outcome of a battle occurred.

"....."

Listy stood there mesmerized, she almost couldn't believe what she was seeing.

The armor Knight's sword -- ran through the left side of Akatsuki's chest.

While Black Sword of Akatsuki's had stopped only several centimeters above the knight's helmet.

A fraction of a second was the difference that divided victory or defeat.

That tragic millisecond lead to his loss.

The Knight pull his sword out from Akatsuki's chest. His body slowly fell towards the ground, as if it was a slow motion replay -- then the Knight drove a kick to the center of his body. All power left Akatsuki's body as he topple over backwards. Listy clearly saw the whole spectacle step by step.

"-----!"

Listy was too busy to dwell on it, as she immediately used her flying magic. Before Listy even noticed she was heading to the bottom valley towards Akatsuki at maximum speed. From the war standpoint, Sherfied's Queen should have been unimaginably far away from the this place. But she completely lost the ability to think of anything -- other than that of Akatsuki.

"Stop it..... Don't hurt him any further!"

In a moment, Listy got between the armor Knight and the fallen Akatsuki.

Fresh blood was gushing out his back through the hole in his chest, and spreading out on the ground. Without the slightest hesitation she held her wand out towards him.

Disdiya's armor Knight's eyes turned hostile.

..... Lulu's recovery magic should be able cure him, somehow.....

The anxiousness inside Listy's heart grew the more she started to think of way to save Akatsuki. Loutier was taken away by Akatsuki's companion. As long as I carry him to the Demon's village, then perhaps there was a shred of hope. However, now was not the time to fight the armor Knight. What was important was to find a way to get out of here as fast as possible. She looked over the Knight's armor from head to toe for a flaw, desperately trying to think of a way get away with Akatsuki.

But -- at this time.

Listy still hadn't sorted out her anxiety, but the situation suddenly changed.

"Paquin" a crisp metallic noise rang out. The armor Knight's helmet was split in two and fell. Even though Akatsuki's slash never hit the powerful Ki around the blade had cut the helmet.

-- And.

At that moment -- the curtain on the biggest tragedy of this war was raised.

".....Lies"

Listy El Da Sherfied stood there dumbfounded.

The armor Knight's true identity was seen for the first time. His face was very familiar to her.

So she lightly called out the name of the armor Knight.

"Le... on....."

She was shaking as she said his name.

The Golden armor Knight was -- Leon Esuperio, who gave her a peaceful smile.

The evidence was staring her in the face. There was no way it was a different person, unmistakably it was that person in question.

Leon looked down at Akatsuki's face lying on the ground behind Listy.

"What happened Akatsuki -- that wasn't like you."

He said while laughing, and exposed a mocking grin.

"Five years ago -- when you killed me you did it without the slightest hesitation."

"What.....?"

Listy couldn't understand right away the meaning what Leon said.

Akatsuki was hovering before the gates of life and death, and the long dead Leon was standing before her eyes. Just one of those things was already enough to cause havoc in her mind. Nevertheless..... Leon now added that

astonishing revelation, it was even more unacceptable. All together, it was beyond the scope of what Listy was able to comprehend.

Akatsuki -- killed Leon.

Putting aside Listy and the mess that her mind was in, the cruelty of situation did not stop there. On the contrary, it continued to proceed. Leon slowly moved forward, it was not necessary to think about what he intended to do. He was going to finish off the enemy -- end Akatsuki's life.

"-----! STOP!"

Along with her heartbreaking voice, Listy hurried to hold back Leon. She attempted to restrain him with her magic somehow. She focused her consciousness, however his feet didn't stop moving. The state her mind was in, there was no way for her to concentrate enough to use magic to stop Leon.

-- However, another person moved on her behalf.

It was Sherfied's pride, the person known as the Crimson sword king, Zechs Doltrake.

Zechs jumped in to protect Akatsuki and Listy.

"Stop -- Leon."

As he quietly said so, Zechs drew his crimson sword, and with no hesitation pointed it at Leon.

..... Why.....?

His behavior only confused her more. How can he be so calm right now? It was as if Leon being the enemy was natural.

But -- the confrontation between the two did not last long.

"Uh-oh..... Seriously, give me a break."

A familiar voice called out from behind. Listy turned back to look, at that moment a young man was standing there. It was same young man that overwhelmed Zechs. He had Akatsuki over his shoulder as he also said "not good."

"Sorry, I know you three are busy over there, and I know it's rude to interrupt old friends catching up, but I need to speed things along. If this guy over here dies, I won't be able to go back my former world anymore."

"Ah..... your one of Akatsuki's companions."

And Leon narrowed his eyes,

"-- Do you think you can walk away?"

Just when Leon was about to take a step, the atmosphere suddenly changed.

"-!"

Listy couldn't help but gasp.

While carrying Akatsuki the young man grinned, an overwhelming aura enveloped the whole area around them.

It was an aura of death -- the young man laughed a few times "Fufufu."

"Don't be so fast to act. Ah, I'm a pacifist, and basically just an onlooker on the sidelines. Umm, probably that's true.... but If Akki dies, then I'll properly be your opponent at that time."

So --

"You best begin to pray, and hope that Akki survives..... I'm not like Akki, and I'm sorry to say I don't have any attachment to this world. Frankly, if you force my hand -- I'll crush you without a care."

After that, the young man with Akatsuki disappeared without a trace.

"Hmm... did he escape? Akatsuki's friend is quick on his feet."

After seeing that, "ha" Leon laughed to himself.

Then turned away from Listy and Zechs, and started to slowly walk towards Disdiya's main force.

".....!"

There was no way that she was going to let him leave like that. She still had so many questions for Leon and wanted his answers. Why are you here? What did you mean Akatsuki killed you? Therefore Listy tried to call out to him and stop him from slipping away.

"Don't -- It's useless Listy."

Zechs grabbed her shoulder.

"No, let me go.....! Zechs why? Don't you care at all?"

Listy's disheveled hair covered her face as she cried out hysterically,

"Why? I don't get it! Tell me..... Leooooooooon ! "

But, nobody responded to her question.

Leon's back just got smaller and smaller the farther away he went.

In the end, she didn't learn a single thing -- and was left standing there.

Part 21

The decisive battle at Gorudono Grand Canyon came to a close.

Akatsuki was critically injured -- From Disdiya's standpoint they believed their original goal was accomplished. Without a means to break through the strengthen barrier around Forestnium continuing to stay here would be useless. So Emperor Baram immediately issued the orders to withdraw.

-- The sword of Disdiya defeated the new Demon King.

The outcome of the battle was immediately spread to every corner of Alayzard.

Chapter 3 - Opening the Door to the Truth

Part 1

At that time -- it was all a blur.

The tragedy had already occurred. It was hopeless a situation, and there was nothing that could change it. And when he took action he picked the worst option.

His wishes weren't transmitted, his feelings wouldn't reach, all his words turned into meaningless cries. Before he had noticed he already clasped the sword lying on the ground, and started running.

There was no feeling. Even through it penetrated his armor --- even though it went through his heart.

Its just that..... in that moment, certainly his hands were trembling.

-- After that.

He fell to the ground together with him.

By the time he opened his eyes, he discovered him already dead.

Although he was still stunned he gradually understood.

Just now, he killed a person for the first time. And it was someone he called his best friend.

Instinctively he knew that he himself --- Ousawa Akatsuki had committed a "sin."

And --

"..... I wonder if I should thank you."

There was another party at the scene of the crime.

Akatsuki sat expressionless on the ground as the man spoke in a quiet voice:

"Let's hear your name, boy....."

However, Akatsuki returned only silence.

And remained silent, soon after the man gave up on getting an answer. The man turned around and slowly began to walk.

As the man was about to leave.

".....Why not kill me?"

Akatsuki asked the question with his head slumped down, however the man did not look back.

"The reason is because you are not my enemy for now at least. Neither emotional, situational, or ability wise....."

".....!"

The mans words caused Akatsuki to bite his lower lip.

It should be noted that at this stage of the game he was just a weak outsider in this war.

Therefore he firmly closed his fists, even though they were still trembling. Still unwilling to give up Akatsuki asked,

"..... You really don't intend to stop this war?"

"No. Both sides have shed too much blood already. No one can stop this war anymore."

The Man asserts,

"Sherfied has fallen... ... Next will be Disdiya and Aleclasta."

"Is that so....."

Even when such a tragedy occurred, even though we all hoped for same thing, genuine peace, everyone will still say the same thing as him. Still, if you say there was no choice but to fight then by all means.....

"It's Akatsuki."

"Akatsuki.....?"

"Ousawa Akatsuki..... it's my name."

Akatsuki announced. And keep in mind,

"It will do well to remember that name. In the near future, without fail I will stand before you."

He paused for a moment.

"When the time comes I will defeat you..... Demon King Galious!"

--- Akatsuki was left alone slumped over as Demon King Galious went away.

The sky began to rain, as if mourning the tragedy.

Even so Ousawa Akatsuki did not get up, and quietly let the raindrops pour down on him.

After that an unknown amount of time passed.

Until he heard the sound of footsteps trampling through puddles coming his way.

From the sound, it was only one person. Akatsuki understood who it probably was without even looking up.

He could say with confidence who it was since it was in his expectation.

".....Akatsuki."

Someone called his name. But still Akatsuki never raised his head.

He did not need to look because it was definitely -- Listy. And then the footsteps suddenly stopped. Listy probably saw it.

The tragic ending.

Therefore, Akatsuki and Listy stayed glued to their spots unable to say a word for a while.



The two were separated by some distance and between them.....

The dead body of Leon Esuperio lying quietly.

Part 2

On the pretext of a prisoner of war Loutier Trum was brought to Forestnium. However, the real reason she was brought to the village was to treat the injured Riruru. After she learned of Akatsuki's intention she immediately agreed to help.

Loutier not only excelled at the high priest's system of healing magic, but was also adept in recovery magic. Not long after the medical treatment Riruru regained consciousness.

".....Thank God.", Kuzuha.

Loutier's vision was focused on the girl known as Kuzuha embracing Riruru with tears in her eyes. She couldn't help thinking: that this girl and Riruru were particularly close. And perhaps she felt some sort of responsibility for Riruru's injury.

So..... Akatsuki went out of the way especially for this girl.....

Loutier was convinced that was the reason why Kuzuha was charged with bringing herself here. As a result, he arranged it so Kuzuha would be responsible for the southern route, and then ordered her to attack Sherfied's camp. All of it was to allow Kuzuba use her own power to help Riruru. Then,

"Umm, thank you."

A girl bowed to Loutier. It was the daughter of the Demon King Galious -- Miu.

"There isn't anyone in Forestnium who can manipulate recovery magic... .. I really appreciate your help."

"No, there isn't anything to be grateful for..... because I wanted to help."

After a few words of humility, Loutier looked at Miu.

"You..... didn't take part in the battle."

Loutier did not mean to fault Miu, she just wanted to check the facts.

"Yes..... that person wouldn't let me fight. As for the real reason..... I'm not sure."

"Is that so?"

While returning a nod, Loutier secretly guessed as to the motive.

Most likely Akatsuki only allowed people from the other world to participate, shielding Miu and Galivein. No doubt, he was still holding out hope for a true peace.

..... In that case, then presently what can I do for him?

As Loutier asked herself that question --

The door to the medical room was flung open.

Invariably everyone focused their attention on the door.

"Emergency! We need the that High Elf-nee-chan brought over here now!"

The youth that barged in face was pale -- over his shoulder was Akatsuki covered blood. Already unconscious, it was apparent that his condition was critical.

At the sight Loutier gasped, and at the same time Miu's knees gave way as she sunk to the floor. A ghastly pale complexion took over her face. Unable to believe what was before her eyes, her voice trembled,

"Him..... how could that person become..... like this."

Haruka and Chikage entered the treatment room right behind Kaidou, and mournfully began to answer her question,

".....It was the work of the armor knight of Disdiya."

"The same one that murdered Urumu-san..... even our puppets were defeated with one blow."

"The story can wait til after..... is there any way we can treat him!?"

"Leave it to me -- quickly, lie him down on a bed!"

Kaidou's tone was urgent, while Loutier nodded and began to give instructions.

The wound was to his left chest. A sharp cut went straight through his chest out the back. There was most likely damage to his heart and major arteries. It wouldn't have been strange for a person to instantly die from this wound. Yet Akatsuki was still alive, probably thanks to Renkan Keikikou. Akatsuki had once explained that Ki circulates much the same way as blood flows in the body, perhaps the flow of Ki in his body acted on behalf of his severed vascular system and damaged heart to transport the needed oxygen and nutrients. But even if that were the case it can't continue for too long.

..... Damage of this level is very troublesome..... still somehow.....

Loutier focused her consciousness, and began to chant the highest incantation of recovery magic that she was able to use. Admittedly solely relying on her magic may not be enough, however by adding in power of Renkan Keikikou self-healing there may be some hope.

..... Please, this has to succeed.....!

The magic formation unfolded, a dazzling light rapidly spread out in the room.

Once the recovery magic was invoked it wrapped around Akatsuki when --
The white healing glow suddenly faded away.

Ousawa Miu had watched on in blank amazement.

After the light had subsided, her eyes were drawn to the wound on Akatsuki's chest that didn't heal.

"This.....?"

"Wh-What just happened? The magic seemed to be repelled.....? "

Haruka looked to the confound Loutier for an explanation. However Loutier furrowed her brows and bitterly,

"The recovery magic..... for some reason was nullified."

It was probably --

"I believe that during the duel at the peace negotiations he was able to stop our final magical attack. I think that this is the same principle, similar to a how a Higher life form possess an absolute barrier. It could be that when Akatsuki was near death his instinct for self-preservation took over regardless of his will."

"Is there..... no other way to heal him?"

While holding Riruru, Kuzuha sorrowfully asked. However,

"The only way to break an absolute barrier of a Higher life form is to borrowed the power of a high ranking Spirit or God."

Loutier said while looking very pale.

"What was used earlier was the highest level of recovery magic that I can use. If that was useless..... then I am at wit's end."

"If so, then is there a way to indirectly apply recovery magic to the wound?"

Chikage mentioned an idea that she learned in the battle against Zahhak.

"Since the barrier repelled the direct magic, wouldn't indirectly applying it do the same thing?"

"It would be difficult..... but perhaps it is feasible to apply it. Anyway, it wouldn't make sense to indirectly apply recovery magic, since it won't have any significant effect. Regardless in the end, it would be considered an direct action effecting his body."

"Arrrrgh..... I can't take it. My head hurts."

After listening to the story, Kaidou scratched his head as he let out a sigh of frustration. After he looked around the crowd,

"Does that mean -- we can only look on helplessly as Akki dies?"

Everyone couldn't help but looked at each other, unable to say a word.

It is because no one was able to come up with an idea.

Akatsuki was right now alone fighting against death, using Renkan Keikikou to self-heal the mortal wound to his left chest. At the moment he resembled a candle in the wind, struggling between life and death.

Miu eyes were glued to Akatsuki laying in the bed. Akatsuki has always told her to 'Believe in me' and now her trust in him still hasn't changed. Akatsuki will surely be saved and firmly believes it to be so.

Most likely the others feel that way too.

After all, how many times has she been protected because of Akatsuki's strength.

""

Miu strongly told herself.

Once again she has to believe in him, while silently praying that that person -- survives. However,

..... I also want to do something for him.....!

Miu doesn't want to be just be protected by that person, hiding under Akatsuki's protective umbrella.

Therefore Miu desperately racked her brains. Akatsuki was trying to use his power to heal himself. If there was no way to help him directly, then at the very least she could support him from the sidelines. There must be something that we can do. I absolutely will never give it up. Then,

".....Ah."

Ousawa Miu had a revelation. A possibility, well more of a gamble. Therefore, Miu stood up,

"Loutier-san..... after I signal, please recite the spell for recovery magic one more time."

"Although it isn't a problem -- Did you have an idea?"

"Yeah. I think it's worth a try."

Miu nodded, and walked over to Akatsuki's bedside.

"-- However, the target for the magic is me."

As soon as she said so, Miu strongly bite down on her lip. A small cut formed on her lip and began to bleed a little.

Ousawa Miu reviewed her hypothesis in her head. Akatsuki was unconsciously using Renkan Keikikou to heal his wounds. In addition to Ki circulating inside his body he probably was taking in the surrounding Ki drifting in the air. Then by using the recovery magic on herself it can be converted with the Ki inside her body. She thought then it might be able to be passed to Akatsuki.

Of course, Miu was unable to manipulate Renkan Keikikou. It was impossible for her to refine the Ki inside her body. However, the physical body of a living creature wasn't made of magic. The fact was recovery magic doesn't directly heal an injury, rather the magic is poured into the body and then converted into recovery energy. Then by -- using Miu as a medium it may be possible to pass that recovery energy to Akatsuki's body. That then could substantially promote Akatsuki's self-healing ability.

So Miu punctured her lip to focus the effects of magic there. And if the wound of Miu's and the wound of Akatsuki's overlapped, the recovery energy gathering in the her lip could then flow into his body through his left chest.

"I understand."

After hearing of Miu's plan. Loutier once again recited the recovery magic.

Miu also moved closer to Akatsuki.

Then she slowly brought her lips towards the left side of Akatsuki's chest.

She closed her eyes as she lightly kissed the wound -- When she did Ousawa Miu strongly wished.

..... Please..... let us lend you a helping hand.

As Miu sensed the taste of the blood, Miu and Akatsuki were enveloped in a white light.

A healing light.

"----

After a while -- Miu released her lips from his chest. The room was absolutely silent, when somebody let out a murmur.

"The wound..... disappeared."

It was the miracle that they were hoping for.

Loutier was the first to break the silence. Her hand gently touched his left chest, soon after she released her breath. Then turned around to looked at everyone on the verge of tears and a small smile,

"It's all right..... the wound was healed. Now we can only believe Akatsuki's vitality."

As soon as she said so happy cheers swept across the room.

They were celebrating the moment from the bottom of their heart.

Part 3

Akatsuki's condition gradually stabilized.

Although everyone obtained some relief, no one was willing to leave the treatment room. Riruru's care was entrusted to the woman in charge of the village's orphanage. Miu suddenly spoke up,

"Umm, Kaidou-san..."

With a tone full of doubts,

"For that person to be so seriously hurt..... how strong was the armor Knight, really?"

Her question caused everyone to move their gazes to Kaidou.

-- She heard from Kuzuha that the puppet strategy worked perfectly against Disdiya's army.

From the start of battle in Gorudono Grand Canyon it looked like the allied armies would suffer a crushing defeat. So Miu wanted to know the truth behind what happened from the person who was watching it directly in the field, Kaidou.

"Hmm..... the armor Knight is certainly strong, but the situation is somewhat complicated."

Kaidou answered,

"I have no way to know him by his looks, but it seems that guy in the golden armor -- is known as Leon."

"-- Impossible!"

After she heard his reply, Loutier immediately stood up knocking over the chair she was sitting on.

Out of all the people present she knew the whole situation better than anyone, and what Kaidou alleged was impossible,

"Leon died five years ago..... how can he be alive?"

Everyone fell silent. They were all more or less informed of what happened back then. The story of the Hero Leon was well known in Alayzard. It was tale about the Hero who laid down his life in order to protect Akatsuki. However,

"I'm sorry but it was your General and Queen called him Leon, not me."

Kaidou continued,

"If that really is case then it was those two who mistook him. However the three of them were having a looooong chat in front of me. Ah well, before I had to interrupt them."

"Then -- it might be a safe bet that it's the same Leon-san who died five years ago."

Haruka asserted, but for that possibility,

"But still it really is hard to believe that he came back after five years, and more turned into an enemy. And now wants to face off against Ousawa Akatsuki?"

A dead Hero becoming the enemy -- this statement was undoubtedly contradictory.

However --

"What if the person who brought Leon back is controlling his mind?"

"....."

After Loutier heard that possibility she fell silent and dropped her head, unable to reject the theory.

"It seems like..... you have some sort of clue."

In a monotone voice, Kuzuha softly uttered.

Loutier eventually began to speak,

"Not too long ago..... Leon's tomb inside Sherfied castle's cemetery was destroyed by an unknown person. Although there was no direct evidence the most likely culprit was Phil Barnett. It seemed that the youth came from the same world as you. In a bid to be recognized as the the new Hero of Alayzard he return to your world..... Still, I heard that you guys together with Akatsuki defeated him, even though he contracted with Zahhaku."

"Well..... Akatsuki virtually did everything alone."

Chikage said with a wry smile. After that her face immediately sank,

"That is to say -- there is a possibility that when Phil destroyed Leon-san's tomb he also took his remains, something like that?"

"Perhaps, but that is all just pure speculation. Also Disdiya is the Empire of the desert which happens excell in art of body preservation using the magic including mummification. It is said that some of their Royal families know of a forbidden spell that can recall the soul of the dead and bring a person back to life. Although that is just unconfirmed rumors, but that spell really does exist --"

"That means that they revived Leon-san to manipulate him."

Haruka couldn't hide her disgust.

"That's way too despicable!"

"I'm not too sure about all that."

While Haruka was trembling with anger, a voice came from the side. It was Kaidou the only one who was there and seen what happened.

Kaidou turned towards Loutier to look her in the eyes.

"That guy Leon said..... it was Akki that killed him."

"No way.....?"

"That sort of answer....."

After hearing what Kaidou said, practically everyone had an expression that said it was unbelievable. That was only natural. It was well know fact that Leon died in order to protect Akatsuki. Only after that Akatsuki obtained his present strength. Supposing what Kaidou said was true, everything will topple from its foundation.

But compared to shock when Loutier learned that Leon was still alive, she seemed particularly calm now.

"It appears as though you know something..... could we slowly hear it?"

The truth will get out -- Kaidou explained:

"Sooner or later we will find out if Leon is dead or alive. If it is true then it would be best to hear it directly from Akki, but the situation may change before he regains consciousness..... So, please explain it."

"..... I understand."

After a sigh, Loutier lightly nodded,

"Since things have progressed to this point, Listy probably already learned the truth from Zechs. As Akatsuki friends, perhaps you also have the right to know what happened five years ago -- The truth of the tragedy of Sherfied."

"So then..... it's all true after all?"

To Kaidou's question Loutier nodded "Yes."

"That day it wasn't Galious who killed Leon -- It was Akatsuki."

Part 4

Sherfied's army had completely withdrew from the battlefield on the grounds that their top commanding officer Loutier was taken prisoner of war.

After returning to the royal castle Listy immediately summoned Zechs to her office.

"What was that all about..... Akatsuki was the one who killed Leon!"

Listy pressed upon one of her most trusted comrades seeking the truth.

At the battle in Gorudono Grand Canyon Listy witnessed an unbelievable spectacle. Akatsuki was mortally wounded in an instant -- and Disdiya's armor Knight turned out to be Leon. Since the scene unfolded in the northern route the Sherfied soldiers stationed to the south didn't witness the events. Which could be said was a great fortune amidst all the misfortune. If it was seen by anyone else, Sherfied would have been thrown into chaos.

Listy bit her lower lip, she could only think of one thing.

.....Please Akatsuki..... you have to be okay.....

Akatsuki's wound was very serious, but there was still his Renkan Keikikou and Loutier was taken there. Anyway right now, all she can do was believe that Akatsuki was safe. Therefore, Listy began to think about another problem.

The person who stabbed Akatsuki through his chest turned out to be the long since dead Leon.

And was what Leon unbelievable declared really -- the truth?

So Listy need to ask Zechs. At that time Zechs stopped her from calling out to Leon, it looked like he clearly knew something. She needed to make sure,

"Is it true.....? The one who killed Leon, really wasn't Galious?"

"Ah well, it's true..... five years ago Akatsuki told me himself."

"What was that....."

Zechs bitter expression said it all, however Listy still wasn't able to accept this fact.

That story was just too absurd, how could Akatsuki kill Leon? But thinking it over, why the need to tell such a blatant lie. Also it was undeniable that the way Zechs and Leon spoke to each other was hostile.

"Tell me this first, Zechs..... who besides you and Akatsuki knew about it?"

Listy said, while concealing her inner horror,

"-- Does even Lulu know.....?"

"Uh..... she also knows."

Listy was stunned at Zechs's admission.

And gradually -- that surprise turned into an indescribable sense of anger.

"For all these years, you all have been hiding it from me.....!"

Akatsuki, Zechs, Loutier, and Listy traveled all around the world together. Their relationship couldn't be expressed as easy as mere companions. Comrade-in-arms -- no, it was closer to that of a family. Yet, now Listy found out she was only person not to know the secret, as if she was never a true companion to the other three.

Then, did all these feeling over five years mean nothing? The one who failed know anything was her, don't tell me Akatsuki and the others pretend to have a relationship with me just to fool me?

..... That was all too much.....!

Listy didn't care that Zechs and Loutier failed to report the one who most likely destroyed Leon's tomb was Phil Barnett. There was no clear physical evidence, and at the time she herself lacked the cool headedness to make the right decisions. And although on the surface Zechs and Loutier's relationship to her were as subjects of the Queen, in all actually they were close friends on an equal footing. She had explicitly conveyed to them, as

long as it was the best course of action for the country, they could make the most appropriate judgment on their own without needing to report everything to her. And if her judgment was ever wrong, she even wanted them to stop her.

But this time it was a completely different story.

Listy bit her lower lip, trying to hold back the sorrow of being completely kept in the dark for so many years from crushing her. So Listy reflected on the facts at hand anew.

-- First, Leon had passed away five years ago. That was an indisputable fact, Listy personally confirmed it.

After all, after the tragedy the very first on the scene was none other than herself.

Now Leon appeared again on behalf of the person who resurrected him.

It's probably..... the work of Disdiya.....

It was said that Disdiya since ancient times has handed down forbidden spells, and among them include a way to recall the souls of the dead. The reason Phil destroyed Leon's tomb could have been to take his remains all along. It was such an unbelievable evil atrocity that runs completely contrary to the moral ethics of mankind, and if it was true it won't be possible to simply forgive.

-- But before that, there are other things to deal with.

That was right. Listy El Da Sherfied must learn the truth. So,

"Tell me, Zechs -- I want to know what really happened five years ago."

Zechs stared straight ahead, before letting out a deep breath. He then lowered his head and quietly,

"..... I don't even know where to start."

"From the start to finish without leaving one word out."

"Yeah, Let it be..... right from the beginning."

Zechs down in thought, seemed to be in doubt as to where to begin to explain the whole thing.

"Five years ago -- the true purpose of Galious's attack on Erdia was not to invade."

Zechs slowly began to untie the knots to the truth.

"It was in retaliation for Leon's actions -- All of the attacks were for sole purpose of killing Leon."

Part 5

At that time, the Hero Leon Esuperio kept a dark secret.

The first to accidentally stumble upon the secret -- was none other than Akatsuki.

Within his heart and soul Akatsuki just wanted to become stronger, so he secretly shadowed Leon. It resulted in Akatsuki discovering the startling "truth" before anyone else.

Usually when Akatsuki and Leon trained together they didn't do anything special. However, he believed the reason why Leon was so much stronger must be some kind of ritual he does alone. But Leon was the Hero, which greatly limited his opportunities to do so. At most, he had a set day in which he returned to help his mother Selina with the restaurant.

That was Leon's private time, so no one chose to disturb him. Still, Akatsuki decided to secretly track him back to the "Wildcat Pavilion."

-- But contrary to Akatsuki's expectations, Leon really had quietly returned to the restaurant to help his mother.

Secretly hiding out behind the restaurant Akatsuki had a view of kitchen. He watched as Leon helped his mother with the cooking. Then after they closed the restaurant the two of them sat down to a meal. It was the very picture of a mother and son having a happy dinner.

So Akatsuki also once concluded that spending time with his mother Selina, and that wanting to protect his family was the secret to Leon's strength.

The sun had set and the darkness had already set in, Akatsuki was ready to head back to the castle when --

The back door suddenly opened and Leon came out of the restaurant.

From the shadows Akatsuki could clearly see a sword in Leon's hand. He was sure Leon was off to go train alone. Leon had stopped before his father and sister's grave for a moment before heading off into the forest.

The thought of becoming as strong as Leon -- or at least catch up a little to his level welled up.

Again, Akatsuki followed after Leon. However, tracking him through the woods at night proved difficult. Not long after he lost sight of Leon.

But -- if he turned back here, he might never learn of Leon's secret. Akatsuki refused to give up. As before this late at night the forest was empty, still he desperately kept looking for Leon's whereabouts. And by chance he caught a glimpse of Leon stepping into a magic circle on the ground, and then

disappearing in an instant. Akatsuki knew of the existence of the <Shift Gate>, and guessed that the magic had the same kind of effect. If he followed suit he might be able to catch up to Leon. But, if he messed it up somehow, most likely he would never return. Akatsuki had to chose whether to remain there or to chase after.

-- If he turned back that might of been his last chance.

However, Ousawa Akatsuki made his decision. After all, waiting there would get him nothing.

And If he really wanted to get stronger he needed to follow after Leon to see what his special training really was.

So Akatsuki slowly stepped into the magic circle.

And in the next moment he stood in an unfamiliar place.

Even in the pitch black, Akatsuki understood that this forest was different from the one in Sherfied.

After confirming the existence of a magic circle to return, Akatsuki let out a sigh of relief before setting out in search of Leon.

Soon after he heard the sound of fighting far off in the distance.

Akatsuki started running towards where the noise originated from.

And -- what he saw was the brutal "Truth."

Part 6

Suddenly Loutier Trum stopped her story there without a word

She was hesitating as to whether she should continue.

But, they knew nothing of the truth. Loutier couldn't afford to stop.

"Can you please continue -- What in the world did Ousawa Akatsuki see?"

Haruka asked on behalf of everyone, Loutier dropped her head and stared at the floor.

After a moment of silence she started to talk again.

Ever so slowly -- she told them the true starting point.

"He saw Leon..... massacring defenseless Demons."

Part 7

The scene was impossible to believe.

There were Demons running in every which direction trying to flee, blood-curdling screams could be heard as Leon hunted them down one by one, none escaped, although Demons physical and magic abilities were superior to humans there were some who can't fight, like the very young and elderly. However Leon showed no mercy, regardless of whether they resisted or not. He just ruthlessly, and impartially single mindedly continued to kill.

Akatsuki reflexively began to run out to try and stop Leon's atrocities. But when he grabbed Leon's shoulder, Leon cried out "Stand back its dangerous." Immediately after, Akatsuki received a blow to a vital point and fell to the ground, losing consciousness.

And -- When Akatsuki opened his eyes next.

Leon was there on one knee making sure Akatsuki was okay.

Akatsuki couldn't help but gasp, Leon floated an expression of relief.

Leon's face was dyed red with blood. On the ground behind him laid countless mutilated Demon corpses.

Leon laughed, with his usual smile.

It's safe now Akatsuki.

-- The hatred over the death of Leon's family become his resolve to be a knight, and at the same time let him continue killing Demons. And as the result it made him a Hero. Whenever he killed a Demon, Leon gained the admiration and applause of the world. Before long -- it was impossible for him to stop.

His raison d'etre as a Hero became wiping out all of the Demons. Leon's eyes just saw red, so much so even the elderly, women and children were not spared.

When the family oriented kind-hearted upstanding youth -- lost his heart he plunged into an abyss. Akatsuki naturally tried to dissuade Leon. He tried let Leon know this kind of slaughter was no different than murder, and that his father and sister's soul would not be happy with such acts. However, Akatsuki's words fell on deaf ears. Leon just said it was a matter of Alayzard -- and that Akatsuki was merely an outsider who doesn't have a say.

In the end he clear-cut told Akatsuki to head to the deepest part of Sherfied's northern forest where the <Gate of another World> was, and as quickly as possible return to his own world.

-- Akatsuki decided to return to the Sheriff. He felt he didn't have the power to stop Leon by himself. So he turned to another close friend for help, Zechs.

Asking -- to stop Leon.

Part 8

"-- Hearing such a story so suddenly did you believe him, Zechs?"

Listy raised a legitimate question, to that Zechs nodded "Yes" without hesitation.

Reminded of the past, Zechs revealed his reason,

"In fact I also..... saw it with my own eyes."

-- Even after he was discovered by Akatsuki, Leon continued to massacre Demons.

At first Zechs thought Akatsuki was playing some sort of joke.

But the look in Akatsuki's eyes told him this wasn't a lie.

In the end Zechs decided to keep this from Leon for now, and rather go to the location Akatsuki described.

To see it for himself, Zechs brought along a magic tool to detect the magical energy of Demons, and a magic tool for teleportation. Using them he was able to find the place in Galevian where Leon was massacring the Demons.

"..... Do you remember? The rumors about Leon's past how he slaughtered Demons."

Listy responded to Zechs with a nod "Yeah".

"But that was just....."

"Yeah, that's right. In wars it is a common psychological tactic to spread rumors to disparage the enemy's Hero..... I thought just like everyone it was a totally unsubstantiated rumor the Demons spread."

However -- those rumors bared the horrible truth.

After that Zechs also tried to persuade Leon many times to stop. But Leon did not have the ears to hear it. He insisted that his mission as a Hero was to defeat the Demon King, and the annihilation of the Demon race. Therefore Akatsuki and Zechs were forced to request help from Loutier to figure out a method to prevent Leon from acting. In the end they turned to Listy's father

-- the former King of Sherfied, and petitioned him to order the arrest of Leon.

But --

"-- His Majesty the King did not agree."

"Father.....? Eh..... Why?"

"Leon's prestige as a Hero was already too well known throughout Alayzard, and arresting him would take irrefutable evidence."

With no less than that, the truth would never be made public. If his crimes were brought to light, all of Sherfied would be condemned.

As a result, they found themselves in a situation where they could do nothing but wait.

However, the situation only got worse. Leon's madness intensified to the point that even Zechs couldn't of imagined.

-- The late King maintained a passive approach towards the war with the Demons.

In that context, Leon becoming a Hero was to be more of a deterrent. If needed he was to suppress conflicts with any Demons and Galious. The former King assumed Leon would to be in some form a symbol of peace for Alayzard. And for a long period of time didn't have Sherfied participate in any military actions against Demons.

Such a compassionate King was revered not only from this own people, but from Royalty and nobles from other countries. However -- for Leon hell bent on annihilating Demons the King's presence was nothing more than a major obstacle.

"So Leon..... secretly began plot the conspiracy."

"Conspiracy ...?"

Listy couldn't help but ask, Zechs nodded "Yes."

After a slight silence, he began to speak of Leon Esuperio's real objective.

"-- The assassination of Sherfied's royal family."

Part 9

"The massacring of Demon tribes..... was the first step in the plot to assassinate Sherfied's royal family."

Loutier had her eyes cast-down, slowly revealing the past truth.

"On the one hand Leon was able to release some of his inner hatred -- on the other he was able to provoke Garlious."

It went all according to plan. Furious over the slayings, Galious personally invaded the Imperial City of Erudia to kill Leon. However, he could of never imagined that his vengeance was lending a hand to Leon's conspiracy.

And -- that day five years ago the royal family, with the exception of Listy, were all killed.

In all appearance it was raid by the Demons, but actuality it was very different.

Leon orchestrated so that the assassin guild would kill the royal family.

-- How would things advance from that?

If the people of Sherfied lost all of their royalty overnight. Who would they turn to rely on first?

The answer was obvious, the Hero.

After the King was lost, Listy's fiancée Leon would be able to become the Hero of tragedy. In his hands would be a justifiable reason to eradicate all of the Demons.

Still even the assassination guild flinched when it received a request to annihilate the royal family. However their leader was willing to bet big that Leon would be the next King. Afterwards they would be granted free rein from Leon. So -- the assassination guild stained their hands with the blood of the royal family.

"Akatsuki having learnt the truth slipped out of Erudia Castle amidst the confusion caused by the attack by the Demon King's army to find Leon. Akatsuki just so happened to arrive when Leon was holding hostage a Demon child facing off against Galious, ordering him to throw down his weapons."

".....Ah, my God."

Loutier heard Kuzuha gasp.

But Loutier thought the real tragedy was about to start.

So she slowly revealed the truth of the past,

"However, things didn't go as Leon planed. He didn't calculate that Akatsuki would pursue him outside of the city's walls. Not only that, but that Listy would chase after Akatsuki."

For that reason only, Listy was able to escape from the evil hands of the assassination guild.

However, Leon received a report through communication magic that Listy's assassination had failed. He once again ordered the assassination guild to chase after her and finish the job. And until he got the report from the assassination of Listy, Leon was going to hold the Demon child hostage forcing Galious not to move.

"I see..... that way he could shift the blame for deaths of the royal family to the Demon King."

Loutier nodded "Yes" to confirm Kaidou's speculation.

"Just as the assassination guild caught up to Listy, and was waiting on Leon's instructions when....."

Loutier took a breath.

"-- Akatsuki picked a sword off the ground, and rushed towards Leon."

The result of Akatsuki stopping Leon's rampage was also him killing his best friend. After learning of Leon's death the assassination guild immediately fled. While Galious took the Demon child and left. After some time, Listy had come running to the scene of the tragedy.

Then afterwards, Listy and the others were forced to abandon the capital, fleeing to Aleclasta. Galious then showed himself at the ruins of Erudia Castle to announce to the world that the royal family had been killed, and the sole survivor Listy was exiled to another country. And from then on Erudia -- was officially part of Demon territory.

"Wait..... how did that come about!?"

Chikage couldn't help but insert her question,

"What he said didn't make it clear that Sherfied's Royal family wasn't killed by the Demon King's hands..... Why did Miu's father take the blame for Leon?"

"As to Galious real motive..... we have no idea."

Loutier shook her head,

"Maybe it was to show off his power to the other countries, or maybe....."

As she said so, Loutier stared at one of girls.

"You know the reason -- Myuu-dono."

Part 10

"..... Ah."

All eyes were drawn to Miu, however being called out so bluntly she wasn't able answer right away.

That Leon was slaughtering Demons, Miu knew a little.

But she did not know the cause or the background of the whole thing.

In truth, the facts she didn't know hit her like rogue wave. Miu's brain was thrown into disorder, her thoughts couldn't catch up right away.

So after much thought, she slowly began speak to everyone,

".....I'm sorry..... I only know a few details already in the story just now."

She lowered her head after saying so.

"And all I heard from my Father after he returned from Sherfied was he defeated Leon-san."

"I see..... This was my wrongdoing. Even under normal circumstances, this must be painful to be reminded of the past."

Loutier said apologetically, Miu shook her head as to say 'its okay.'

Miu doesn't know why her Father, Galious protected Leon and made himself the scapegoat. She never heard either.

After her father lost the duel and entrusted her to Akatsuki was the same.

Things ended at that time without a chance to talk things through, her father had already stopped breathing.

"-- That is all I know about what really happened five years ago."

Loutier summed up,

"The only people that knew are Akatsuki, Zechs and myself..... and one more."

"Another person? Doesn't Queen Listy not know?"

Haruka couldn't help but frown, Loutier nodded "Yes."

"It's just as you said, Listy doesn't know. The truth of this matter is enough to shake the country. For that person's safety, their identity cannot be revealed."

"....."

Loutier's words involuntarily made Miu stare blankly.

Because there was one person who crossed her mind. It was just a guess, but it was more like conviction.

.....She must be the one..... I'm certain.

In Ousawa Miu mind echoed that gentle voice.

"..... This war has taken my husband and my children."

Even so, that friendly shop owner was able to accept her.

Leon's mother -- Selina Esuperio.

That's right. At that time she had even said to Miu,

'-- And you should also know about my son, right?'

Miu never asked what exactly those words meant, she assumed they were pointing to Leon being a hero.

But rather she alluding to fact that Miu was a demon, and should of been aware of what Leon had done.

..... So that was the reason.....

Ousawa Miu finally understood why.

Why Selina hated war so much. Why she was able to be so friendly with Miu. It was all because she understood better than anyone how many lives were lost and how many of their families were destroyed. The true nature of war -- grief.

War always gives rise to hatred which can lead to madness. This type of uncontrollable hatred will eventually trigger a negative chain reaction. That was why Selina supported Akatsuki and Miu's plan to stop human aggression towards the Demons. In an effort to prevent it from boiling over into another war breaking out.

-- But now, Akatsuki was seriously wounded because of the past tragedy.

However, Miu still hadn't forgotten what Selina expected of her.

'Stop this war with Akatsuki, and then come back here to eat some of my homemade cooking.'

Break this chain of hatred -- and settle the tragedy of the past.

..... Right.

Miu raised her head, her innermost thoughts have changed into a oath. Ousawa Miu stared straight ahead,

"Thank you Loutier-san for telling me the truth."

In order to stop the war, Akatsuki told Miu not to take part in the battle.

But that was also useless. Even not part of front line there were ways to help.

Miu was certain her power was needed to stop this war.

..... It's not too late.....

Ousawa Miu clenched her fists. Akatsuki already used his power -- now it was her turn to do something for everyone.

Part 11

The heavy atmosphere wasn't caused by superficial words, but the weight of the truth.

Zechs put everything out in the open about the truth of the tragedy five years ago. Listy heard all his words, however she still was able to completely accept the hard truths right away. There were still things she needed to hear by all means. Therefore, a little doubtful it took a few moments for her to get the first question out.

"..... How come you never told me?"

"Well, that was because of Akatsuki..... you should be able to understand, right?"

Like a sigh, Zechs said his name,

"That guy didn't seem to want to tell you..... and asked us not to."

To prevent the cruel truth from ever hurting Listy.

"For my sake? He said that, right?"

Listy stared into Zechs's eyes. She was frankly grateful to Akatsuki and Zechs for their consideration. But still in these five years -- there was probably an opportunity to tell her truth before now.

At first Akatsuki went to seek help from Zechs, then the both of them went to find Loutier, and then the three consulted with Listy's father. A natural progression seeing as he was the former King of Sherfied. At least Listy thought so. Unfortunately the possibility of her learning the truth before now was virtually zero.

For the country, but also for Listy's sake her father probably choose to conceal the truth. Maybe even imposed a gag on Zechs and Loutier.

But five years ago -- father the King, and the rest of the royal family were murdered. Even if there wasn't a formal coronation ceremony, Listy had become the next leader of Sherfied.

"As the Queen of this country, I should of been informed about this national tragedy..... as well as the right to know about father's death."

"Yes..... You're right."

Zechs nodded,

"However -- Akatsuki also has his rights."

"Akatsuki's rights?"

Listy couldn't help but ask. Zechs nodded "Uh huh", and answered.

"Yes, Akatsuki also had the right to do it for your sake!"

And at last Listy El Da Sherfied heard the final truth.

"In fact..... Lulu and I wanted to report the truth about Leon to you."

Zechs sighed,

"We at that time were a knight and a officer of this country, and there was an obligated to report this critical information which could influence the country to you, the princess..... And we absolutely thought it wasn't fair for Akatsuki to suffer through all those public incrimination for causing the Hero's death."

"In that case..... then why?"

"Because Akatsuki begged us with all he had not to say a word to you."

That day five years ago, Listy was forced to abandon the capital city of Erudia, exiled to a foreign country to live on as the last member of the royal family of Sherfied. It could be said her life was thrust to the depths of despair, however she was not lost in self-pity, because in Listy was the responsibility of a Princess.

What was still left in her spirit was the need to move towards retaking the capital city of Erudia.

"At that point in time, there was no guarantee that telling you the truth wouldn't have cause your mental state to collapsed entirely."

And it was also the same for the people of Sherfied. Almost all of their royal family was killed overnight, their castle and their capital falling to the demons were already a big enough blow to them. Moreover, if they knew it was all an act of the Hero that they all believed in. The country of Sherfied would of fell to ruin.

So Akatsuki said to Zechs. When all was said and done I am one person, an outsider compared to Listy and the other surviving people of Sherfied. Who should be given priority was obvious.

Thus Akatsuki chose to conceal the truth deep inside himself, and repeated the same words over and over.

Leon died -- to protect him.

As a result, it was decided that Leon died to save Akatsuki from Demon King Galious. With the honor of Hero Leon intact, and the hope of regaining the capital in her heart -- Listy was barely able to keep her sanity.

However, in exchange for hiding the truth Akatsuki sacrificed his reputation.

"At that time Lulu and I's reaction was just like yours now, and not entirely convinced. I even told that guy to his face..... he was in the wrong."

Zechs paused.

"Then that guy said "Still..... I do not want to see anymore of her tears," and smiled with his face in tatters. He bared with the infamy and its hardship without saying one word of complaint. Listy, how could we have told you?"

".....Zechs."

The red-headed general's voice trembled, Listy didn't have any words either. She finally understood that Zechs and the others chose to remain silent after a very serious struggle. More than anything else was -- the tragic determination of Akatsuki's deeply moved her. And,

"In order to stop a woman's tears, even at the expense of hell -- That guy's aesthetics were born at that time."

What Zechs really spoke of was the beginning of the hagure aesthetics of Ousawa Akatsuki. Even if the world casts him aside as long as it can reduce the sorrow of the woman a little he wouldn't mind a bit. If it was essential to hide the cruel truth, then what harm was there in telling a lie. So,

"The first time Akatsuki fought for Sherfied..... was not when he freed the capital."

In the same manner Zechs reported the truth about Leon.

Which was to slowly reveal the -- unknown truth about Ousawa Akatsuki.

"That day five years ago, that guy alone protected you and this country."

Chapter 4 - Maidens Make Their Move

Part 1

In the dim light of night only quiet footsteps were heard.

The stillness engulfed the cathedral that Church of Richard boasts.

Milanda Quenty was idly walking through the empty corridors, a peaceful smile appeared on her face. Soon after she arrived before a massive set of doors. On the other side of those doors was a spacious hall, standing in the middle was the legacy of olden times passed down through the church -- the <Shift Gate>.

"Miranda-sama, at such time, is something the matter?"

Once the female bishop in charge of managing the Gate noticed Miranda, she promptly called out to her.

Miranda calmly answered,

"Yes. On instructions from his Holiness..... I've come see a little lower."

Which meant -- she had to depart from the capital of Aleclasta, Aslanda the floating city in the sky.

The female bishop understood the meaning of the words and lowered her head respectfully, then opened the door to the Gate. Miranda slowly made her way into the room. The heavy sound of door closing behind her echoed. She kept strolling ahead -- and stopped in the depths of the hall.

She looked up at the huge circle-formed object before her. Countless sacred colored glass stones encircled an inner like mirror surface, that clearly projected any images before it. Miranda looked at herself reflected in the <Shift Gate> with a delighted expression.

"-- Akatsuki-kun was seriously injured. Those girls also learned the awful truth."

Milanda Quenty mouth formed an ice-cold smile,

"This world because of those girls, how will it all change?... .. I'm really looking forward to it."

After talking to herself -- She slowly passed through <Shift Gate>.

Part 2

-- Just after the peace negotiations and the duel ended with Akatsuki in the arena.

The fierce fighting had come to a close. Listy went back to the east side waiting room, the exactly opposite side to Akatsuki's. She was there all alone. Zechs and Loutier were in the infirmary receiving treatment for the disrupted ki within their bodies.

"....."

Listy silently sat on a bench against the wall. Her fingers trembled as she went to touch her lips. Thereupon, she clearly felt a trace of Akatsuki's warmth still on her lips.

".....!"

Listy felt her face turning red, in a panic she closed her hands and placed them on top of her thighs. Akatsuki kissed her -- it was different from the surprise kiss he gave her when he returned to his own world. It was a real kiss. Akatsuki almost demanded it, and deprived her of the lips aggressively, but still she accepted the kiss from him. Tens of thousands of spectators were witnesses.

The cheers and applause from the audience as they gave their blessing to Akatsuki and herself still reverberated in her ears.

"I hate this..... what should I do....."

Listy felt faint. Then,

"What is it? Is something wrong?"

A voice suddenly came. Startled, her eyes reflexively stared at the waiting room's entrance.

"Akatsuki -- Why are you here?"

"Why here..... I just want to see you again."

'Is there something wrong with that?' Akatsuki's broad smile seemed to say.

Then, he came into the room and sat down next to Listy on the bench.

"W-Wait a moment..... a place like this, what if you were seen by someone --"

Akatsuki and Listy were on friendly terms despite fighting each other in the duel. She acted as a representative of the Tripartite alliance, while Akatsuki was the representative on behalf of Galevain. Although the outcome of duel was decided, it just meant the peace negotiations could shift into the next

phase. However, at this sensitive time period it was just the two of them alone, it will be hard to stop any gossip from spreading.

To begin with all the entrances in the arena were heavily guarded, including this one. However, Akatsuki nonchalantly,

"What does it matter? The duel is over. If it's against the rules for the winner to visit the loser, then it isn't a problem. Since it was you guys who had won."

"But..... The real "winner" should have been you."

It was Alphonse stratagem that forced him to take part in the duel against the trio from Sherfied. She only thought that her winning would lead to them falling into his trap.

However, Akatsuki turned his overwhelming disadvantage on its head, and ultimately won the final victory.

To Listy's sulky voice, Akatsuki only smiled,

"Wrong. The real winner was not me, rather it was ours -- you guys and me."

As he said so he glanced at Listy, Sherfied's Queen involuntarily averted eyes from him in shame.

..... I hate this..... what am I to do.....!

Her cheeks became flush, and her ears were burning hot. Well, there was no helping it. That kiss during the duel was still fresh in her memory. Then she saw Akatsuki smile wryly, as if he read Listy's thoughts,

"Though I understand your feelings..... you don't have to force such an atmosphere."

"Eh? -- me. I never, umm..... had such an intention at all!"

Listy hanged her completely red face down and,

"If you came all this way to tease me, you should be satisfied now, right? Please leave the room at once. The peace negotiations just reached a consensus if someone bumps into you and I sharing a room..... that type of misunderstanding wouldn't be funny."

"Your thinking too much. Its not like you did something to feel ashamed over."

After saying so, Akatsuki showed a big grin,

"Or is it that -- you want to give it a try?"

"I want to... .. EH?"

Listy started to repeat his words in hope of asking Akatsuki what he meant, but then it hit her what she said and what it all meant. After that she shifted her whole body over a little on the bench, trying to get some distance from him. But she could not escape. Akatsuki easily stretched out his hand and grabbed hold of Listy's wrist. With a laugh,

"I guess it goes without saying..... Of course the thing to be ashamed over then."

He barely said so, as Akatsuki immediately printed his lips on hers. There was no chance for Listy to resist.

"Mmm --!..... No... Ah, mmm..... mmmhhrmm ~ ~!"

Listy made an effort to escape from Akatsuki's lips, but it wasn't possible. Akatsuki's left hand already wrapped around her back, gently embracing her closely. She had no say in letting it go.

..... I hate this..... how can this be.....?

Listy was at a loss. Although she intended to resist, but for some reason was not able to.

Then she fully realized that she no longer had the will to defy Akatsuki since the kiss a while ago. She was completely at his mercy.

Against Akatsuki's tongue trying to enter her mouth, Listy's lips meekly obeyed.

Her lips slightly opened, and Akatsuki went straight in. Inside there was nowhere to hide, as their tongues intertwined and rubbed against each other.

"..... Mrrmm, Chu..... chu, mm..... ugh."

A sweet voice leaked from her mouth, adding to her feeling of embarrassment. It only made Listy's heart beat faster, almost uncontrollably.

And the depths of her body began to burn up.

She felt it, and there was nothing she could do. In this semi-public place, her lips were forcibly taken away by a man --

..... What do I want.....



On that fact, Listy got the feeling she was trembling to the core of her body. So much she thought it was shameless. However, before she knew it even such thoughts disappeared from her mind. She was pushed down on the bench and subconsciously wrapped her arms around Akatsuki's neck blindly kissing him, already forgetting about a woman's modesty. She was now engrossed to the point she almost couldn't breathe.

Before long -- the lack of oxygen in her lungs caused her consciousness to wane. Akatsuki quietly parted from her lips. Listy slowly opened her eyes, staring into Akatsuki's gentle face.

"..... Is this fine?"

A gentle question was posed. However there was not enough time for Listy to answer, his hands were already on top of her clothes. Still Listy didn't resist, since Akatsuki's deep kiss at the beginning the word "resistance" was wiped from Listy's mind. While she let out a passionate sigh, her clothes were opened from the front. To make it easier to move in combat she wasn't wearing any underwear. Everything from her breasts to her waist was completely bare.

"..... Ah."

Her fervent skin was exposed to the outside air, and in full view of Akatsuki's eyes an indescribable tingling ran throughout her body. When Akatsuki saw such a Listy he quietly said,

"For a long time..... I've always wanted you."

Those words were the most important key to her. Listy had desired for a long time now for him to say that.

The remaining traces of power completely left her body, only adding its softness.

Akatsuki was also prepared to accept to her.

He tenderly pressed up against her. Listy slowly closed her eyes.

-- But, nothing happened beyond this point.

"Eh.....?"

Akatsuki's warmth and weight disappeared, Listy couldn't help but open her eyes.

Inside the waiting room there was only one person, Listy.

"Akatsuki.....?"

Listy involuntarily stood up from the bench.

Thereupon the tips of her toes felt something wet and slippery to the touch. Listy's eyes turned to the floor.

There -- collapsed on the floor was Akatsuki covered in blood.

Part 3

"-----!?"

The shock woke Listy from her sleep.

"Haa..... Haa.....!"

Along with her shortness of breath and dry throat Listy was able let out a noise. Then Listy looked up.

The interior of the room was familiar. It was Listy's office. She was sitting at her desk. She finally understood, it was all just had a dream.

-- After the duel in the arena, Listy indeed returned to the waiting room alone.

And then reflected on the feeling of Akatsuki's kiss.

But everything ended there, Akatsuki never went to Listy's waiting room.

..... To have that kind of dream.....!

Listy bit her lower lip, and reminded herself to remain calm.

Akatsuki was absolutely still alive. There was no reason not to believe in him.

..... But that embarrassing dream.....

Listy was blushing. A dream was said to be a way to realize a hidden desire. Could it be that her wish was for Akatsuki to do that kind of thing to her? Though she was embarrassed, at the same time she felt a little relieved that it stopped at a kiss. It would of gotten awkward if things went further then just kissing. Anyway.....

"No matter how tired I am..... there is no room to doze off at a time like this!"

Listy couldn't help, but shake her head and sigh, but it wasn't a mystery. Since Akatsuki became the new Demon King, and formerly declared war on Disdiya she had almost lived a life of sleepless nights.

She had already found no signs of Zechs in the room, and then Listy suddenly remembered. After hearing the whole story she asked Zechs to

leave, because she wanted to be alone for a little bit. As she was thinking of what to do from now on the cumulative fatigue of the past several days finally caught up to her, and she fell asleep.

The facts that came out of Zechs mouth surpassed by far what Listy could ever have imagined.

-- However, after a few hours of sleep for first time in days Listy's head was clear.

Therefore Listy began to face the truth again anew.

First of all -- was the inner darkness Leon had.

He was bound by hatred and then those thoughts drove him mad. In Listy's mind the most appropriately word to express how she felt about the matter would be "regret."

The culprit behind -- the murder of the royal family, both her parents and relatives, was none other than Leon. That cruel fact hit home the hardest. However, Listy had come to terms with the grief of losing her loved ones, even knowing that the real murderer was Leon she won't bring herself to direct her hatred towards him. To begin with it was the royal family who chose the path of war with the demons, without doing that perhaps Leon may not have been driven into a corner.

"But --"

Listy thought even if she could sympathize with him, she still couldn't accept his behavior. Leon lost to his own hatred, caused by the weakness of his mind. Listy won't blame Leon for that weakness, but also can't defend the way he handled it. Leon was not the only one to lose his family because of the war. There were a lot of people in the same circumstances, even Listy was among them. No matter how much sadness and bitterness was in your heart, you should have grit your teeth and looked to the future. To strive to live every day is the responsibility of those who survived. In Leon's case there was a trace of regret in her heart for being so close to him and yet unaware of his suffering.

..... I'm sorry Leon.

Listy had learned the sad truth about her former fiance -- yet she was still able to keep calm.

-- Why? Listy was fully aware of the reason.

There was a definitive answer that all this time hasn't changed.

A dark secret she never told anyone.

For Listy, the Hero Leon was her fiance.

But -- she didn't have any romantic feelings towards him.

-- Of course, it didn't mean she hated him either. Leon was always gentle, had a strong sense of justice, and in everyone's opinion was the prefect person fit to be the Hero. Listy also agreed. There was no way she could hate such a person. In fact she spoke favorably of him.

However, is speaking favorably of someone tantamount to love? The answer is definitely no.

A royal marriage was not the crystallization of love, rather purely an obligation.

All for the purpose of continuing the prosperity of a country. Therefore if Zechs's distinguished military services got him recognized as the Hero, Listy's fiance would have been Zechs instead of Leon.

However, Listy never intended to object to the matter. Since she was born as a member of the royal family, she would carry out her royal obligations. And Listy was determined to act like Leon's lover, all to please the soldiers and the people of her country. So she did what was expected of her.

But.....

One day -- Listy's quiet life encountered a storm.

It was her unexpected run in with Akatsuki.

Even thinking back now, it was still the worst meeting. At that time, Listy was taking a bath, when out of the blue Akatsuki fell on top of her stark-naked. For Listy having been seen by the opposite sex, also having her body touched as well was her first experience. She was angry enough to kill him on the spot, but having learned that Akatsuki was summoned from another world she was able to control her anger somehow. And that was how Akatsuki became a guest of the castle, and began living under the same roof. Everyone within the city walls would take care to treat Listy respectfully, fearing the slightest offense. However, Akatsuki's frivolous attitude and casual tone when interacting no doubt set off a series of exclamation points. In those days, she thought it was almost every day that she would get angry at Akatsuki. However, it was because of his influence she was able to learn how to express her inner emotions, and gradually find her true self. Those days,

..... Life was really enjoyable.

As a princess of a country it was hard for Listy to spread her wings, yet Akatsuki easily freed her from her birdcage. Usually he appeared to be free-spirited, but occasionally when no one was around revealed a look filled with worry that was almost painful. After she discovered an unknown side to Akatsuki, Listy gradually couldn't take her eyes off him.

Then one day, Listy became self aware of her feelings. She liked -- Akatsuki. However, such thoughts were not allowed. To not let anyone notice her feelings Listy buried them deep in her heart. For people of royal lineage it was a sign of pride to be able to repress your emotions.

In some shape -- her lie was also the same.

Just like how Akatsuki considered herself and Sherfied, and decided to hide the truth about Leon.

Listy also chose to hide her true feelings.

But on that day -- when Galious attacked the capital of Sherfied, Erudia. After she saw Akatsuki run out from the castle, Listy let her feelings override her reason for the first time and promptly chased after him. And through looking everywhere in the rain she found Akatsuki safe and sound, and was immediately relieved from the bottom of her heart.

However, Listy lost too many things that day. Both her parents and relatives, the castle she grew up in, and the country she must defend were lost. And the hope of the country Leon died. It was all too much. The despair pushed Listy to the edge of a complete collapse, but at that moment one thought emerged from the bottom of her heart.

-- I will do anything to not lose Akatsuki.

It was her biggest fear.

She can withstand the loneliness of Akatsuki not being by her side, but not the pain of parting forever. So she rejected Akatsuki.

All for the sake of pushing him to return to his own world faraway from Alayzard.

Listy chose to lie.

-- Its all your fault that any of this ever happened.

Part 4

Even now Listy felt ill about it.

Those words that came out of her mouth must of torn apart Akatsuki's heart.

But at that time Listy wholeheartedly only hoped for him not face any more danger.

She thought as long as she explicitly rejected him, he would return to his own world. So when Akatsuki disappeared Listy's heart was filled with regret that they parted because of a misconception. It was sad but.

If it meant he would be safe and sound then Listy didn't mind.

-- However Akatsuki never returned to his own world.

He went to <The boundary of the Gods> alone. Putting his life on the line to obtain enough power to protect everything. Therefore, when Listy was fighting to free the Royal capital, and had found herself backed into a wall. She unconsciously prepared for certain death.

At that moment a familiar back suddenly appeared in front of her. Even now she remembers it clearly.

His body had been trained to the point he was almost a different person with an overwhelming power lurking inside. To achieve such results within such a short time, the extent of how much blood and sweat Akatsuki put in was evident.

Mere words weren't sufficient to describe how she felt.

For the first time she knew what it was like to have a feeling beyond description, even with all the words in the world.

After that of course she apologized to Akatsuki for the terrible words she had said to him. He just smiled and said he didn't take it to heart.

Nevertheless for rejecting him in the worst way possible Listy felt she lost the right to express her true feelings to him. So until the end -- even after Akatsuki defeated Galious and was on his way to return to his original world. She kept her feelings buried, and never expressed them.

..... However.....

Listy wasn't willing to betray her feelings any longer, and was unable to keep calm. Because was it not? Akatsuki the one, who she wanted to protect at all costs, and on that day five years ago he protected her and safeguarded her country all alone.

If not for Akatsuki neither herself nor Sherfied would still exist now.

Before she was barely able to suppress her feelings for Akatsuki.

However now, after learning the truth from Zechs the levee burst in Listy's heart.

The feelings she had been holding back for so long began to overflow and couldn't be stopped. So,

"..... Un."

Listy nodded and stood up from her chair. She made up her mind. It was just him protecting her so far, now it was her turn to do something for him.

..... Because I don't want to regret anything else.

She believed that Akatsuki was absolutely alright. None the less the present situation was greatly unfavorable to him. In any case, no matter what she will protect him.

As the Queen of Sherfied, Listy had her responsibilities and obligations. With both sides at war priority had to be given to one or the other. Listy must pick between protecting Akatsuki or Sherfied.

But, was that really so? Akatsuki has not given up. Furthermore he hasn't given up on Galevain or Sherfied, and hasn't given up on true peace. That being the case, how can she give up so easily?

This time it was her turn protect Akatsuki, while he tries to safeguard everything.

"-----"

Listy threw open the door to her work room, and quickly walked down the long corridor.

"Listy-sama..... Pardon me, is there anything you need?"

A maid was waiting outside the room, Listy smiled only for a moment,

"Inform Valkyria to gather all members of the Council of Ministers -- I would like to convene an ad hoc committee."

After Sherfied's Queen announced such, she continued straight down the corridor. Listy El Da Sherfied was no longer hesitating, or going to cower. She likes Akatsuki, but also loves this country.

She wasn't going to betray her feelings another time.

Although there was not much time left -- Let's start with the attitude of never giving up.

Part 5

The mood inside the room was exceptionally heavy.

The stillness of the forest after nightfall made it feel like time was a stand still.

Currently they were waiting in Forestnium for Akatsuki to recover.

Disdiya right now was probably basking in their defeating Akatsuki, Ousawa Miu thought. They were probably convinced of their victory, and were probably letting down their guard. However, even if they seized the opportunity and launch a surprise attack she was afraid that it wouldn't turn around the situation.

..... And if we move..... we must be absolutely certain not to fail.

Miu already decided to no longer only depend on Akatsuki, but taking action in this situation was also not sensible. And if that operation failed, then Akatsuki would be exposed to even greater danger. Things were bad enough as it stands, we can't afford to make it worse.

Therefore, after thinking it over Miu calmly concluded the best way to change their overwhelming disadvantage was to show that Akatsuki was still alive and well. Let the whole world know the new Demon King possessed a strong body, even after receiving a fatal wound he remained as strong as ever.

Fortunately, there was still a little time. As of now the enemy does not have an effective means to attack. Urumu sacrificed himself in exchange for strengthening the conceptual barrier still in place. In case they have a method to break through the barrier, they will take full advantage of Akatsuki's injury to attack sooner than later.

So Miu decided to wait for Akatsuki -- for moment when the young man everyone believed in was restored.

""

Kaidou was the only who headed out a just a while ago. Chikage, Kuzuha, Haruka, and Loutier all stayed in the treatment center with Miu, quietly waiting for Akatsuki to wake up.

Until a few moments ago the room was filled with chatter, but before they knew it went silent. After all the reason they all stayed was to wait for Akatsuki to recover, not to chat about meaningless topics.

Naturally since no one choose to talk time passed very slowly.

Then -- at the door of the medical facility suddenly came a light knock.

"-- Who is it?"

Miu stood up to ask, immediately from outside the door came a familiar voice.

"It's Kurt..... I'm sorry to bother you at a time like this, but can I have a moment of your time, Myuu-sama?"

"It's okay. Come in."

With Miu's consent the door was quietly opened, Kurt appeared in the darkness. However, he didn't try to step foot in the room.

"What happened..... no, something must be on your mind if you went looking for me, right?"

"....."

Kurt silently looked at the other four people present except Miu.

Most likely because he didn't want to be heard by others.

".....It seems it would be better to talk outside."

Sensing Kurt's intention, Miu made a move to the door. However, at the entrance he shook his head.

"No, it would be better to talk indoors..... since there is no moon tonight."
(Tl note -- double entendre -- moon is one of characters in Akatsuki)

After saying so, he presented an envelope to Miu.

"Not too long ago this was found outside the village by one of the patrolling guards. Please forgive me, on the side of caution I have already opened it to confirm the contents in the envelope."

It was an official document with the wax seal broken, what was pressed into it was the emblem of Disdiya.

"....."

Miu silently opened the envelope and read the letter inside. And,

"-----!"

The message Disdiya sent made Miu slightly shiver. The wording was arrogant, but the content was even more inexcusable. However, Miu quickly regained her composure. The others must never know of this. Then,

"Myuu-sama... .. We also received this envelope."

Kurt passed her another envelope. On a closer look it had the emblem of Sherfied. She opened the envelope and read the contents of the letter.

"....."

Then she quietly folded the letter back up and put it back into the envelope.

"-- Miu, is there a problem?"

Chikage's voice suddenly came from behind. Miu turned towards her and smiled back,

"No, its nothing. The villagers are..... just a little uneasy."

She said up to there, then Miu's eyes turned to the back of the room.

Only for a moment, she just watched Akatsuki continue to sleep on the bed. And said,

"I will go reassure the villagers -- I will be back soon."

Part 6

Miu exited the medical facilities, and immediately took to the air using her wind magic along with Kurt, who was waiting in the nearby forest. The moment they got far enough away the door opened again.

Chikage and Kuzuha appeared from behind the door. They noticed how Miu's face didn't look quite right, worried they decided to follow after her. I'm sorry.

After losing sight of the medical facilities the two stopped to take measure of their surroundings. Miu looked back one last time before setting off.

After that they quickly reached Forestnium's border.

"-- Do you really intend on going?"

On Miu's right side, one step behind Kurt spoke up.

"Yes. Kurt, you also saw that letter, and should be able to understand the seriousness. We have to move now, even if that person hasn't recovered. Otherwise -- We will all lose."

Written in the letter from Disdiya was,

'If you do not surrender before sunrise, the wandering forest will be set on fire.'

Their official document was a means to threaten them. The barrier would protect Forestnium from any harm caused by the fire, however the forest outside the barrier would be burnt to ashes.

There along with the forest -- the people of Forestnium would share the same fate. For generations it has been preached into them to have a symbiotic relationship with the forest.

Once the Forest was devastated by the fire it could never be restored. Even if new green buds were to form the forest wouldn't take on the same shape. The fact was burning the forest was synonymous with destroying the country in which Miu pledged her life to protect. Moreover the forest was home to many animals, when the fire breaks out those animals will naturally flee deeper into the forest. Since outside of the forest they would only be turned into prey, and only in the forest was there enough food for them to live. But also those driven deeper in could be obstructed by the barrier around Forestnium. In the end the animals had nowhere to go, and will be surrounded by the flames, and burned alive.

..... I will never let them do such a thing.....

That said, it was still possible that it was all purely a threat. The burning of the forest would be an effective means to compel Galevian to surrender. However, in the war so far Disdiya hadn't taken such measures.

That means either the time for that hadn't arrived yet, or more likely they don't want to so.

If it comes down to burning the forest, and the massive killing of animals the matter wouldn't be considered a small thing. Even if it was for subduing Demons it will give rise to public criticism. However it can't be taken as a simple threat either. Disdiya had already disregarded the conclusion from the peace negotiations and forced this state of war. Even going as far as to use forbidden magic to revive Leon, unconcerned with challenging the laws of nature. With reasoning like that becoming the butt of public criticism for destroying the Demon's forest wouldn't be all that surprising. So,

..... We must protect this forest.....

Miu can't help but speed up the pace. Her target was not Disdiya's garrison stationed at the outskirts of the forest, rather a place with a like-minded ally.

Listy El Da Sherfied.

The sender of the other envelope delivered to Forestnium. In her letter she wanted to somehow fix the worsening situation, and hoped to privately engage in talks with Miu.

Ousawa Miu was completely aware that Listy thinks the same way about Akatsuki as she does.

That was why she believed in only her. The current situation could be said to be very detrimental. Still, if this war was going to be stopped, Listy had no choice but to join forces with her.

Perhaps this was their last hope. Miu felt she found the thing she was able to do herself at last.

This was her battle.

Therefore, she went to the meeting place Listy specified, in the corner of the Wandering forest. It was the same place where Miu and the others originally came to Alayzard, and meet Riruru as well as a scouting party from Sherfied.

If they elected to meet outside of the forest it was extremely possible she would of been spotted by Disdiya's soldiers. So the forest was the safest place to meet. Then from behind Kurt advised her in cautious tone,

"Though Sherfied's offer in the letter was certainly attractive..... it was possible it was all a trap."

"Un..... that's right."

Miu understood that. Therefore she didn't take Chikage and the others. She had thought just in case it was a trap by Disdiya, Kuzuha could of have made a puppet of Miu to attend in her stead. But if Listy really does appear at the agreed meeting place the fake might upset her for not believing in the exchange. Not only losing the opportunity to talk openly to each other, moreover the last hope will be lost at the moment.

So, Miu must go there in person.

"Whatever the case may be..... it seems your set on going."

Knowing Miu was going to stand firm, a sigh escaped from Kurt. And,

"At least allow me accompany you as your escort."

"I appreciate your kindness, but..... that won't be necessary."

Miu stopped to look up at Kurt's face,

"If it's really someone other than Queen Listy an escort won't be unnecessary. It would be just two people falling into Disdiya's trap instead of one."

The worst possibility was she would be killed. It was enough for just her to take such a risk. Besides the sender specifically called out Miu, meaning she was the one they wanted. If anything, her going could buy a little bit of time for Galevian, and also give Akatsuki more time to recover.

However, Kurt refused to budge,

"Queen Listy should have also brought along a guard, right? If this really is a trap, than when compared to just Myuu-sama the odds of two people escaping is higher. Also it would be better to deal with a surprise attack."

His tone became more serious as,

"If I let you go there all alone..... how could I ever face that young man again."

Akatsuki fought for Galevian without saying a word. Such thoughts of Akatsuki were greatly appreciated, and he himself felt the same as Miu in wanting to use his power to help that man.

Inside Kurt's eyes, Miu saw an unshakable determination and,

"I understand... .. Then let's go together."

A clear nod was returned by Kurt. She couldn't bring herself to say only she will go alone, since Kurt held the same thoughts as her. So the two of them started walking again.

They passed through the barrier protecting Forestnium -- into the pitch black woods.

Part 7

The agreed meeting place was shrouded in a suffocating silence.

"This should be the place....."

Miu muttered while looking around. In her heart she question the authenticity of that letter.

Whoever called her out here was late in showing themselves. Miu was extremely worried.

The letter had been placed in a conspicuous place outside of the village. It was reasonable to expect that the sender would have arrived first at the agreed place, and for them to be waiting for us to approach. However, there wasn't a soul in sight. Could it be that --

"-- Someone is coming."

Hearing Kurts voice, Miu immediately turned to look.

On the other side of the forest a Sherfied soldier appeared.

"Thank God..... that letter was real."

Miu couldn't help but let out her relief, but Kurt looked sour.

"No -- Regrettably this is a trap."

When he finished saying that, he was holding the pike he had on his back in his hands.

Then from out of the forest -- several Sherfied soldiers appeared. It looked as if they were crawling out from the deep darkness. In each of their hands was either a sword or an axe.

"Eh....."

Miu was involuntarily stunned. Of course, the possibility of this being a trap was taken into consideration.

It was just that she thought Disdiya would be the one to spring it.

..... Sherfied also uses these kind of despicable tactics.....!

She was betrayed by someone whom she believed in -- that shock stuck at Miu's heart. But, Kurt stepped forward to protect Miu with hardly any agitation, and at once focused his mind to launch the magic spell. Then,

"Haaaaaaaa -- !"

After letting out his fighting spirit Kurt brandished his pike. At the same time with his burst of magic he wrapped up the wind into a whirlwind. The encompassing Sherfied soldiers all crashed into the trunks of the tress, and tumbled to the ground.

"Myuu-sama, now get out of --"

Halfway through Kurt was struck speechless because the knocked down soldiers began to get up. Faced with enemies he can't beat, Kurt's face hardened.

"This..... is just like that time when that armor knight of Disdiya attacked the village."

"It appears it was like that....."

While a little faint, Miu was convinced. This was a trap set up by Disdiya.

"Such elaborate mimicry..... to go as far as putting on Sherfied armor."

She said so regrettably, while biting on her lower lip.

"-- No, that was their own armor."

She suddenly heard a strange voice. Miu looked back, and couldn't help but gasp.

Having appeared from the darkness was a golden Knight.

He took off his helmet revealing the true identity of the Knight, who wander out aimlessly. Miu was dazed, as she let out the name of that person,

"Leon Esuperio.....!"

When Leon heard that, he suddenly had a hauntingly serene smile on his face,

"Do you remember the incident that started this war? These are monitoring force that were annihilated."

"Eh.....?"

For a moment, Miu could not understand the meaning of Leon's words.

However before Miu had a chance to respond -- a figure ran out from her side.

"-- Kurt!?"

Kurt heard Miu's appeal for him to control himself.

However, he didn't stop. There was no way he would. The man in front his eyes was the one who killed the nonresistant paternal grandfather. And now, he planned to harm Miu. No matter how cool-headed Kurt usually was, he was unable to just let him walk away. So Kurt sprinted, shortening the distance to Leon in one breath,

"Accept your death, monster --!"

He pulled forth all the power from his feelings inside him, and concentrated it into the pike in his hands stabbing it forward at his enemy.

But -- the tip of the pike did not reach, because it was taken. Leon nonchalantly held up his left hand..... and caught the pike with his index finger and middle finger. Then revealed a smile full of contempt,

"Unfortunately -- your hatred was not strong enough."

Then simultaneously, a light flashed vertically. Leon had counterattacked with his sword.

"Gaaa -!"

Kurt immediately thought to move back a few steps, but his evasion was too late.

Leon's sword cut through his pike, inflicting a deep wound on his body.

"Gu.....!"

Kurt's face distorted from the sudden sharp pain coming from his abdomen, powerless he was forced to one knee. Then,

"Your reaction wasn't bad..... though it was a little slow."

After Leon indifferently evaluated, he prepared the finishing blow. He raised the sword above his head, only for a moment did it stay mid air -- Leon's sword went straight down, when a strong force pushed Kurt to the side. A sudden gust similar to magic used to fly brought him into the air.

"-- Myuu-sama?"

High speed winds had blown him high up into the sky. For a split second he clearly saw it.

Miu was standing there with her magic wand raised facing him, and then she made a soft smile. Her lips then quietly moved as if saying something to herself, when --

At almost the same time, the handle of Leon's sword struck her in the pit of the stomach.

Her wand fell from her hand, disappearing into nothingness. Miu lost consciousness and slumped over to the ground. Then the ground before his eyes rapidly got farther away, Kurt was longer able see what was happening.

"Myuu-sama.....! Gukkusoooooooo!"

Kurt's sorrow filled shout was drowned out by the wind magic engulfing him.

Only the soft sound of a gust of wind quietly ran through the dark night sky.

Part 8

The emergency convening of the Council of Ministers of the Sherfied Kingdom was well underway.

Since Listy ascended to the throne this was the most chaotic, and urgent meeting.

Almost all of the Ministers strongly opposed Listy's proposal.

However, Listy wasn't willing to make any concessions. She described the present situation while explaining the best path her country should take.

Her unwavering determination impressed upon the Ministers, until finally they accepted her proposal. Listy El Da Sherfied laid out her convictions.

..... This way Sherfied will be safe.

But it was not over yet. Listy left the conference room alone at a quick pace to allow the Ministers to discuss the details. There was a person waiting outside in corridor for her, Grand Chamberlain Valkyria.

Listy passed by her side, as Valkyria followed her one step behind,

"..... Did the Council of Ministers progress smoothly?"

"A consensus has been reached. The next step is to stop this war."

And Listy,

"Was Zechs not informed.....?"

"Yes. In accordance with Listy-sama's wishes he is waiting elsewhere. Zechs-sama has no knowledge of the Council of Ministers."

Valkyria spoke of it indifferently, Listy said "Then, it is good." with a smile. Although it was difficult, she cannot afford to enlighten Zechs as to her plan. He was someone indispensable for this country.

"Time is running out, we need to quickly move to the next phase. First we must contact Galevain's former Princess..... and hope she willing to listen to us."

"On that matter --"

Suddenly, Valkyria voice stiffened. Listy knew by that itself something was wrong. She stopped,

"..... What happened?"

"A little while ago we received information that former Princess Myuu-sama had been caught by Disdiya."

"No way..... how can that be?"

Currently a powerful barrier was in place around Forestnium.

No matter who it was or how many, no one was able to break through that barrier produced from concept magic.

"According to the spy in Disdiya's ranks, Myuu-sama was apparently tricked.....it seems they deceived her by using Listy-sama's name as a decoy to lure her outside of the barrier in hopes to negotiate with you."

"Who ever heard of such a thing!?"

Listy was trembling with anger. First they turned their backs on the peace agreement to launch an attack, and now they resorted to such a cowardly lie to deceive. To what ends will Disdiya go. Is there no justice?

..... But -

Apart from angry, Listy felt very confused. Why would Miu accept such a request?

Even though Listy planned on contacting her in the future, she thought it was going to be difficult for Miu to trust her. She must of been aware that there was an extremely high chance of being a trap. But, she still went -- Why?

Then Listy remembered the girl at Akatsuki's side who firmly believed that peace will eventually arrive.

..... Does that mean that girl --

Listy could only conclude one thing, and gasped.

Miu didn't believe in such a request, but trusted in Listy.

Akatsuki was now injured, and thought that only Listy could stop this war.

And even while knowing it could be a trap she decided to expose herself. She was willing to sacrifice herself for a glimmer of hope of achieving peace.

All for the sake of saving Akatsuki, and the people of Galevain.

Listy couldn't help think about how she should act now. Miu had already put her life on the line, then it was only natural for her to work just as hard. Miu wasn't the only one who's thoughts were on Akatsuki.

"-- Now that their former princess Myuu had been caught. How is Galevain reacting?"

"They are keeping quiet..... I can't make out anything abnormal."

"..... I see."

Then looking at things that way, Akatsuki was definitely alive.

If Akatsuki was dead, Miu would have been the last hope for Galevain. Then they most certainly would have taken action immediately when she fall into enemy hands. Since they were able to stay calm, then some kind of hope still exists for them.

And --

Precisely because Akatsuki was still alive..... That girl would run the risk of going outside the barrier.

Knowing that was already sufficient for her to make her move.

So Listy won't stop, and steps bravely forward.

"Valkyria -- I would like to somehow get in touch with prince Alphonse currently under house arrest. Try to get one of our informants in Disdiya to send a message to the Prince."

Part 9

After being knocked out by the hilt of Leon's sword, with great difficulty she managed to regain consciousness when--

As soon as Ousawa Miu identified where she was, her breath was immediately taken away.

And before her eyes stood an unimaginable person.

She was locked inside an isolation cell, both her hands were stretched out and chained to the wall as if she was a criminal about to be executed.

The women in front of her reached out her hand to touch Miu's cheek to confirm if she was awake.

"Ara..... looks like your waking up."

The woman said with an ice-cold smile.

"How can you be in..... here....."

Miu was at a loss, as she tried to ask her question. Standing there was Aleclasta's number 2.

The young Archbishop of the Church of Richard -- Miranda Quenty.

What was this all about? Hasn't Aleclasta always adopted a neutral stance towards the war?

And yet Miranda was clearly standing there. Does that mean they are no longer remaining neutral?

..... This can't be because I got caught.....?

Just thinking that sent chills down her spine. Akatsuki had sustained serious injuries, and she was taken hostage trying to buy some more time for him. In Aleclasta eyes the situation looked like it has shifted in Disdiya's favor, so they had no other option but to renounce their neutrality and join Disdiya's side. If that was the case, then Miu's action set in motion the downfall of Galivain. However -- it was at that time,

"Miranda-dono this should of been satisfactory to confirm the authenticity of the hostages, I presume."

A voice suddenly came from the other side of the iron bar window. On closer look it was from a Disdiya soldier, presumably was there to keep watch or something. There were two guards each standing on one side of the door to cell carrying weapons. One of them looked somewhat impatient, "Were you able to believe it now? We have arrested Galious's daughter."

"Ah well, that is her. It was well worth the effort in convincing Your Majesty Baram."

Miranda said, and stepped away from Miu,

"Because of Forestnium's powerful barrier I initially struggled to believe that suddenly the Demon King's daughter was apprehend while the barrier was still in place. But..... it appears the news was true."

Miranda made a small laugh as she said,

"I wonder..... What kind of hand did Your Majesty Baram play?"

"That..... is not a question we know how to answer. If you want to know you will have to ask someone higher up, I'm sorry.-- Regardless, with this the war will end with our complete victory." (tl note - means they don't know anything, so ask someone who would)

Said a Disdiya soldier.

"From now on -- what does Aleclasta intend to do?"

"Well now, I wonder..... that's not a question I can answer."

Miranda while deepening the smile, she used their own words against them,

"If you want to know. I'm sorry your going to have to ask someone higher up."

".....!"

The only person above Miranda was Pope Volk. For a mere foot soldiers of Disdiya how could they ever consult with him face to face. Knowing they were being made fun of the soldiers depressingly sank into silence.

Over hearing their conversation Miu couldn't help thinking: they were already discussing how to handle things after the war.

Disdiya had disregarded the peace negotiations, and took it upon themselves to start the war. Aleclasta maintaining their neutral stance had always been troubling for them. The Church of Richard has a huge influence over their country, and depending on how Aleclasta acts the future of

Disdiya could be greatly affected. Even the soldiers on the ground, who don't understand diplomatic struggle between the leaders of the two countries, could feel the uneasiness.

Miranda began to leisurely walk out of the dungeon cell as if laughing at the impatience of the two soldiers.

Then she stopped at the doorway to look back at Miu and softly spoke, "It is disappointing..... that the future you wanted cannot be realized."

""

Miu bowed her head in silence, Miranda looked at her reaction and also kept silent. Then Miranda continued towards the exit without waiting for an answer.

"..... It's not over yet....."

No one heard her voice as Miu softly whispered.

It was still too early to give up. After all there was still -- Akatsuki.

However the tears running down her cheeks spoke otherwise.

She had become a hostage and could be killed at any time.

The future that herself and Akatsuki believed in had been rejected by Miranda.

And the cruel reality was Akatsuki wasn't there to wipe away her tears yet.

Her tears contain all sorts of feelings jumbled up -- but she remained resolute in her faith.

At that moment -- everything began to change.

-- And at present.

Miu had fallen into Disdiya's trap and taken hostage.

After hearing the news Listy sprang into action.

In addition, the last side was keeping ominously silent with some sort of sinister design.

Still, this war was beginning to move to a conclusion.

At that time.....

A youth slowly opened his eyes.

"..... You were crying."

The youth muttered while staring at the ceiling. He seemed to have a dream, but couldn't remember what it was about. But the youth was sure of one thing -- somewhere there was girl he knew very well who was crying.

He couldn't let that girl continue to cry, so the youth raised himself up off the bed. The left side of chest felt a little itchy, then he noticed the piercing wound had already healed. It was impossible for Renkan keikikou to completely erase the wound. It must of been the work of recovery magic. Therefore, Ousawa Akatsuki floated a fearless smile, he seemed to understand what happened while he was comatose.

So he announced --

"Well -- It's about time for me to make my move."



Chapter 5 - Just Wanted to Tell You

Part 1

When Akatsuki opened his eyes there wasn't a soul in sight in the treatment room of Forestnium. Ousawa Akatsuki felt it was just a little bit disappointing.

He was expecting at the same time he woke up a girl would be lying in his arms -- then he planned to massage her ample breasts and perfectly round butt to his heart's content.

"Where did all the breasts and butts go? Aaaah, my hands feel so empty."

Then the door to the entrance opened.

"Suddenly waking up and started looking for women?..... You're more energetic than I thought, Akki."

With a wry smile Kaidou entered the room.

"This should be part where you say thank you, right? For rushing you half-dead on my back all the way back here. Come, let me hear it: 'thank you very much for saving me, Kaidou-sama.'"

To Kaidou's frivolous speech, Akatsuki abruptly laughed.

"You have my thanks, but only to the level of I would tell someone "Sankyu." And this favor of yours wouldn't by chance have anything to do with a certain someone not being able to return to their original world if I died, am I right -- Kaidou-sama (sarcastic)."

"Uhhh, that's pretty awful, to come straight out..... and suspect someone of their kindness."

"It's not awful. It's just my natural tsundere-ness."

Watching Akatsuki act as if nothing ever happened, Kaidou couldn't help but sigh.

"Ah, I guess that's fine. Anyway..... I also heard an interesting story."

Kaidou smiled,

"As it turns out that Knight in golden armor was Akki's best friend whom you killed a long time ago. No wonder your behavior in the middle of fight was so unusual. It never occurred to me that you'd be the sort of person to botch things up because of sentiment. Unexpectedly, you have a really big heart, Akki."

"..... That Lulu has a really big mouth."

Akatsuki couldn't help shake his head with a wry smile.

"-- How much did you hear?"

"For the time being, I'll just give you the gist of what we know of the tragedy five years ago. It was a real tearjerker..... a best friend driven mad, a beloved woman, a country on the verge of ruin, and for the sake of it all you chose to sacrifice yourself. Tell me the truth Akki, are you a masochist?"

But well --

"There's actually very few girls who won't eat that up. In fact, it seems they all have fallen madly in love with you, Akki. So much so that guy snuck off without telling anyone. Ah well, I suppose things are going to be a little troublesome because of it now."

"It's not surprising that not one hasn't. I mean -- are there any new changes?"

Akatsuki asked Kaidou. Even though Akatsuki was unconscious for a period of time, Forestnium should of still been protected by the newly formed barrier cast by Urumu's concept magic. So he was under the impression that the situation was still at a stalemate.

Then Kaidou nodded "Ah,"

"Akki, your sister -- well, not your real sisters. At any rate, she decided to make a move on her own and got caught by Disdiya. And now those young fellows of the village have begun to make noise to go rescue her. So Izumi, Doumoto and the Vice-President are desperately trying to persuade them from acting so rashly."

"..... I see."

Akatsuki was able to grasp the situation to some extent. From what Kaidou said, even if they were to know of the past truth he didn't think that Miu would jeopardize herself so recklessly. She should of properly learned her lesson from the whole Phil Burnett episode. That being the case, this was likely a trap or there would of been some sort of threat made from Disdiya's side. Nevertheless this cannot be ignored, and must be dealt with immediately.

"-- How long has it been since that guy got captured?"

"Not too long ago. There is this villager Kurt..... it seems Urumu was his grandfather. When things happen that fellow was at the scene. Somehow he got away and staggered back to the village clutching a stomach wound. It was because of him we know this much. Right now that High Elf from

Sherfied is tending to him. However from the looks of him, it will be a while before he can move --"

"-- No, there is no longer anything wrong with me."

A voice suddenly interrupted Kaidou from the entrance. On closer look there were bandages wrapped around his abdomen and chest, Kurt was barely able to stay standing in the doorway.

Then he slowly dragged his body closer to them.

"Hey hey, are you okay?"

"As I already explained there is nothing wrong."

Leaving that aside, Kurt coldly stared at Kaidou,

"If you don't mind -- could you leave us for a moment?"

"Even if I say I mind, are you going to throw me out?..... That look in your eyes."

'Ah well' Kaidou shrugged his shoulder and,

"Well that's fine, I only came to visit Akki anyway. So I already finished my business."

As Kaidou was making his way out of the treatment room from behind him,

"Before you go, let me hear your thoughts..... Kaidou."

Akatsuki laughed. That's right, he knew what Kaidou was really after.

Kaidou came to see him after hearing Leon was the armor Knight, who inflicted the serious injury to him, and that Miu had been taken hostage by Disdiya just to see what kind of reaction he would make.

"So how about it -- did you get the answer you wanted?"

"I already gave you my thoughts, that was 'you're more energetic than I thought.'"

Kaidou looked back to show off his devious smile.

"If I can find my answer..... Akki, it will all depend on what you show me next. Don't let me down."

Otherwise,

"I will end this foolhardy war."

After saying so, Kaidou walk straight out of the medical facilities. Akatsuki on the other hand, watched him leave as a peaceful smile emerged on his face. Then declared,

"There is no need to worry -- I already know this it not your fight."

Part 2

After confirming Kaidou had completely left.....

Kurt lowered his head, and bowed to Akatsuki to apologize.

"I'm very sorry Akatsuki-dono -- I was not enough to protect Myuu-sama."

"You don't need to apologize. I don't think you would take the risk of having that guy leave Forestnium..... most likely it was all her decision, right?"

And Akatsuki added,

"Tell me -- what exactly happened?"

Because of Akatsuki's request, Kurt began to describe how things played out. Including how Disdiya threatened to burn the wandering forest. Furthermore, how they deceived Miu by using Listy's name to lure her away from the barrier into the forest. And then who abducted Miu -- Leon.

"..... So it went like that."

Akatsuki coldly snorted after hearing what he said. That bastard. Using forbidden magic to revive Leon was already going to far, but now Disdiya had the gall to use such a despicable tactic. Well, this was probably good. If that was how they intend to act, there won't be any more mercy. I'll destroy them until it becomes impossible for them to undertake such actions again.

"Nevertheless --"

Akatsuki slightly muttered to himself,

"Ahhh, that idiot..... she still does as she pleases, and again planned on sacrificing herself."

After a slightly wry smile, he let out a helpless sigh.

"That comment -- I can not let slide, Akatsuki-dono."

Kurt's attitude until then completely changed. As he glared at Akatsuki, he lowered his voice and,

"I'm very grateful to you for how you protected and supported Myuu-sama until now. However, you do not truly understand who she is. Not only this time, but for awhile now Myuu-sama has been taking into consideration the big picture -- to the point where it is almost crushing her true self. She acted thinking it was in best interest for everyone. You have been by her side for

awhile now, don't tell me you never question why she was talking like that?"

In the tone that was condemning Akatsuki,

"To think Myuu-sama is considered an idiot by you, who doesn't understand her difficulties. When in fact --"

Kurt then started to help him along,

"-- Have you ever heard what they all used to say about her behind her back?"

Akatsuki answered Kurt's question before he answered it himself.

This was Ousawa Miu's dark secret.

"It was a shame she was not born a man, right?"

When he heard Akatsuki's answer, Kurt couldn't hide the shock on his face.

It was too unbelievable.

"It couldn't be that -- Myuu-sama talked about it with you before?"

"No, that guy never mention anything..... Oh well, I just figured that's how it was."

-- Galious had an overwhelming power and charisma that enabled him to become the Demon King while being a former human.

In this era of war, the tribes would have certainly hoped for Galious to have a son who would inherited all his innate characteristics, and then lead the next generation of tribes as their Demon King.

But contrary to their wishes, Galious's heir was a girl. The tribes naturally had no say in choosing the child's gender, without any better options they accepted the fact. However there were still those who felt greatly dissatisfied. Only adding to their regret was that Miu possessed a high natural talent for magic leading them to think if only she had been born to a man.

Unfortunately -- it was impossible for Miu to not notice what they all really wanted.

So Miu thought to deliberately changed the way she spoke to pander to everyone's expectations, adopting a masculine tone. Still, because she was still a girl at heart she couldn't bring herself to use the masculine "ore," her absolute limit was to use the schoolboy "boku" to address herself. As she

got older her outward appearance began to look more and more like a human, which only added to her sense of distress.

"If you were aware..... then why didn't you say something to her?"

Kurt angrily griped to Akatsuki,

"Since she gave up her identity as the Demon King's daughter, and began a new life in the different world it wasn't necessary to be bound by the past. At least with you it was possible for Myuu-sama to become an ordinary girl --"

"Perhaps that is true..... but I have no right to correct that guy's manner of speaking, or to order her to use a feminine tone either," Akatsuki countered,

"So in order to cater to everyone that guy forced herself to speak like a man, and now because I sensed something was troubling her I have to make her use a feminine tone? Was that pretty much what you said. Well then that's just superposing a lie with another lie, and wouldn't bring out her true self. That guy is repressed enough already. Do you have the heart to let her continue to play a role for someone and not be her own self?"

Akatsuki had decided to wait until Miu raised the matter on her own initiative.

There was no immediate hurry, letting nature slowly take its course was fine.

After all, it was not only the true side that made her up. Even that false identity she lived under was part of Miu.

Ousawa Akatsuki unconditionally accepted all of Miu.

Whether it was happiness, sadness, her fake or real face, everything.

Akatsuki looked at Kurt and smiled,

"You don't have to worry..... I have it all clearly in mind."

Both Miu's feelings, and what Galious believed he would do. Therefore -- Ousawa Akatsuki promised,

"I will rescue that guy, and bring true peace to Alayzard."

Part 3

After their conversation ended, Kurt had left the treatment room.

He intended to convince the young people of the village to not act on impulse.

Akatsuki thought with just that conversation alone it was not enough for Kurt to completely trust him. However -- at the very least Kurt should be in a position where he would cooperate. So Akatsuki decided to leave his back to Kurt and began to prepare to stand once again on the battlefield. He took hold of his right wrist with his left hand, and tried to grasp it with all his power. The grip strength felt through his palm was inferior compared to normal.

"It's probably only half ... That should work."

Akatsuki laughed to himself. It was not the schedule that decided a match, rather it was the myriad of ever-changing factors in the real fight. It was impossible to always be in the absolute best state when preparing to face an enemy.

So Akatsuki resolved himself that he was going to be victorious.

And when Akatsuki got off the bed the door to the medical facilities was flung open like a hot brick, and a group of people rushed in. It was Chikage, Kuzuha, Haruka as well as Loutier.

They probably came running over, since they were all out of breath. Seeing them like that, Akatsuki couldn't help but smirk,

"Yo. What's with all the panic --!"

However, his comment was interrupted. The petite body of Kuzuha had immediately wrapped her arms around Akatsuki's waist.

"We were worried..... really worried about you.....!"

While tightly hugging Kuzuha to calm her trembling shoulders, Akatsuki was shaking his head.

"I'm sorry..... this was my fault," Akatsuki said with a wry smile.

Then one after another the other three came closer to his side.

"After hearing from Kaidou you regained consciousness we all came running over as fast as we could."

After she said so, Chikage sighed with a smile on her face,

"It looks like you're almost back to normal."

"Ah yeah, I feel fine."

Akatsuki answered, and then asked,

"How are things on your end? Are those guys in the village still making a fuss?"

"Yeah..... but, it's not like it is unreasonable. We feel the same as them, and are anxious for her to be immediately rescued."

And Haruka said with a pensive look on her face,

"There was just a message sent from Disdiya saying to effect they are holding Miu-san hostage. And unless we promptly lay down our arms and issue our unconditional surrender -- at sunrise they intend to carry out her execution."

"Still, that plot is way too cliché..... Do they think they have already won?"

Akatsuki snorted, before a mocking smile emerged on his face,

"It appears a practical lesson is needed before they can correct their mistakes."

"Akatsuki, are you intending to go to the enemy camp?"

Luckily she arrived with the others in time, Loutier couldn't help but let out a sigh.

"Charging in the enemy's camp by yourself isn't a smart move -- Myuu-dono, would want you to reconsider."

"You should know by now trying to stop me is useless..... that guy might be in some dungeon crying alone."

Akatsuki barely finished telling, when --

"We already know that none of us can stop you."

Kuzuha still clinging to his waist looked up at him,

"But please, let us go together with you to --"

Before she had a chance to finish, Kuzuha abruptly lost all her strength and fell towards Akatsuki. He had put her sleep with a soft chop to the back of her neck.

"Please don't be too offended Class Rep, but I couldn't let you finish what you wanted to say."

During the battle at Gorudono Grand Canyon Kuzuha had pushed herself to the very limit. It was impossible for him to take her along in such a state.

And -- that was also the case for the other three.

"W-wait a minute, Akatsuki! Why --"

Chikage was baffled as she stepped up closer. Akatsuki promptly poked her forehead with his index finger. All the power was drained from her body at once, her eyes slowly shut before losing consciousness.

"You were asking me why I would do such a thing? Well..... it's not like I don't understand you feelings."

Akatsuki gave her a gentle smile and,

"But, in your condition you couldn't even dodge that level of surprise attack. How can I let you follow me to the battlefield?"

Akatsuki laid Kuzuha and Chikage side by side on the floor, and then turned towards the two people who remained -- Nanase Haruka and Loutier Trum. Then,

"I will absolutely accompany you."

Haruka said very firmly,

"That kind of surprise attack won't work on me. Above all, wasn't it you who said I needed witness everything before making my final decision. So no matter what, I will be witness until the end."

"I did say..... I would let you witness until the matter ends. But....."

Akatsuki said, then slowly walked over to Haruka,

"Taking a woman along with me who is not at full fighting strength really isn't my style. And you should witness the whole story of the war, however to keep you safe and to walk out the barrier alone I need to put you to sleep as well."

Akatsuki grabbed her arm at lightning speed, and forcibly pulled her close.

"Wh-what do you think your doing.....!"

Completely ignoring the panicking of Haruka, Akatsuki smiled as he softly whispered in her ear,

"Recently there has been a growing trend of ascending to heaven with only the earlobe..... I would hate for you to miss out."

As soon as he finished talking he skillfully bit down on Haruka's ear.

"--!? Fua -- aaaaahhhh!"

After she cried out her body slightly quivered in his in arms. However Akatsuki didn't plan to not stop there, instead he poured even greater amounts of Ki into her until Haruka's consciousness faded far away.

After confirming she could no longer budge --

"I would like to hear what you could make of him coming back."

Akatsuki helped move Haruka over, so that she was laying next to Chikage and Kuzuha.

"Hey Lulu....."

Akatsuki asked over his back while looking at the serene expression on the three's sleeping faces,

"Is there no way we could..... save Leon?"

After a moment of silence.

"Yes..... there is unfortunately."

Loutier sadly answered Akatsuki's question,

"Leon died five years ago. Right now his existence is only temporary because his soul was bound by the forbidden spell cast on him. The only way to save Leon is to let his soul truly rest in peace."

"If that is so..... then I understand. I'm sorry for this. but I'm going to hand these guys over to you."

Akatsuki then stood up,

"Akatsuki..... although your injury was healed, it only closed the wound. It hasn't fully recovered to its former condition."

Knowing there was nothing she could do to stop him, Loutier still gave him her warning.

"And your physical strength has yet to recover..... In this state if you go back out to fight --"

"-- This state? Hey hey, are you not forgetting something, Lulu."

After he said so, Akatsuki turned to face Loutier,

"You already healed my wound, and those guys were so single mindedly thinking of me that that guy has become a hostage in the hands of the enemy."

Ousawa Akatsuki laughed fearlessly, as a reliable aura exuded from his whole body,

"I will clearly say it -- I am the strongest, just not in best condition right now."

Thirty minutes later.

Akatsuki's figure once again appeared at Gorudono Grand Canyon.

Although Akatsuki had been seriously injured he was still alive. As a precaution Disdiya had stationed soldiers to monitor any activity from

Galivain. Upon seeing him they immediately went on high alert. However they merely stuck to their positions, and showed no signs of attacking.

Perhaps it was because of the eeriness. Even though location was slightly different the reappearance of Akatsuki still calmly standing on the top of a cliff reminded them of the battle. Therefore, not one of them were able to move. Akatsuki's tactics at that time went completely against their expectations. Now seeing him like that again Disdiya's soldiers couldn't help but be naturally cautious, fearing what surprises he had in store this time. And it was even more unnatural that, Akatsuki being fully aware that Disdiya had taken Miu hostage just stood there motionless. Therefore Disdiya's soldiers tensed their nerves, and strengthened their wariness.

But -- one thing was for sure.

That this time that wasn't an earth puppet, but Akatsuki himself. Even from their distance they could tell from the blueish white aura coming out of Akatsuki's whole body. That was the main reason the soldiers kept observing from a far away place.

Akatsuki openly stood on a cliff as if he was ridiculing their cowardliness.

Part 4

The Kingdom of Sherfied capital city of Erudia.

In the middle of town near the castle there was a restaurant that continued to provide unchanging taste to its customers.

The lone female owner took care of everything, from tending to guests to cooking, for the restaurant named for her hometown, the "Wildcat Pavilion."

"Yesssss, thank you very much. Take care on your way home."

After nightfall the restaurant abruptly transformed into something similar to a tavern serving alcohol to its customers. The owner just saw off her last group of customers.

At last her full day of hard work had come to an end. It was well past the original business hours. But, satisfied with her diligent service the female owner -- Selina Esuperio let out one big sigh,

"..... I can finally rest," she said.

After that she went back into kitchen, and was about to put out the fire to the stove.

When the door to the shop opened, and a customer walked in. Selina stuck her head out from the kitchen look.

"Oh..... this is indeed a very rare visitor we have here."

Selina was only slightly surprised for a moment, before a deep smile emerged on her face.

Who walked in was a burly man. He had a large face, his body was enormous, and his limbs were particularly strong. However behind such a man was a woman wearing a long red dress. The pair certainly scared a lot of people walking on the road. Then, the man looked directly at Selina with his piercing eyes,

"I came to get something to eat."

"You are just like Akatsuki..... couldn't you pick decent business hours to show up?"

Selina couldn't help but shake her head.

"My profession is rather special. I can't just visit so easy while other guests are eating."

She said, the Madam of the prostitution guild -- Melissa then exposed an impatient look,

"Does this restaurant always make their guests wait forever to be seated? Really inconsiderate."

"Oh, I'm sorry this is a little shop that always lets its guests to choose a seat to their liking. It is quite different from a upscale brothel that has to thoroughly lead their clients."

And Selina,

"That said, it is now long past business hours..... I can only put together a simple dish with leftovers. If you don't mind?"

"Just as well, anything would be good as long as it is served quickly."

So Melissa moved towards the empty seats in back of the restaurant.

"However --"

"I know..... you would like a generous helping, right?"

Selina said while making a wry smile as she went into the kitchen. With not much to work with, a short time to prepare an ample meal, and moreover an obnoxious guest who doesn't have the courtesy to not show up after closing.

And if they were ordinary, she would casually dispense with them nice and quick.

..... But that won't do. I need to show off my skills.

Selina smiled. It was a rare visit from an old friend, of course, she would have to put out something with her own special skills. And so -- she was going to satisfy her guest's every demand.

Before Melissa was able to finish her first cup of beer Selina had brought over five dishes on top of a platter. Each one was distinct from one another as she place them on the table. And with a face was full of confidence,

"How is it, good?"

"Well..... it's not bad."

Although Melissa's evaluation was curt, Selina felt a deep sense of satisfaction.

Just now that was the highest compliment she had ever given her after all these long years of friendship. So Selina pulled up the chair opposite her, and looked at Melissa wolf down her food,

"-- So? What business brings you here today?"

Melissa was not one of her regulars, and without warning she came in today. There must be some other purpose for her visit. Then,

"No reason..... I just thought to occasionally come and see you."

After saying that much, Melissa continued to quietly eat her meal. Selina thought it was nice of her to consider her, but knew her purpose was not to simply visit a friend.

-- I already know that Akatsuki was seriously injured on the battlefield, and Miu was taken hostage by Disdiya.

And today all the customers while eating their meal could talk about nothing but the decisive battle at Gorudono Canyon. Naturally, this was Disdiya leaking intelligence that was advantageous to them.

Therefore Selina Esuperio was very grateful for the thoughtfulness of her friend. After Akatsuki visited the restaurant the other day, he probably spent those several days until the duel with Listy laying low at her brothel. Akatsuki had once said if you ever wanted to know something for certain Melissa would know everything said in the city, and turn to her for help if not sure.

And perhaps during their stay she learned of Akatsuki and Miu visiting her restaurant.

-- After the sun comes out tomorrow. The war will probably have ended.

Selina thought it would be probably hard for her to sleep tonight. She no longer had a family anymore, and didn't have someone to comfort her to lessen her anxiety.

Therefore she thought who was it that came to see her, and it was a terribly blunt old friend.

"..... I'm really worried about those children."

Selina muttered, not looking for an answer. Then Melissa suddenly put down the knife and fork,

"Rest easy. I'll tell you the latest information that came to my place. Akatsuki was safe and sound, and had just made an appearance at Gorudono Grand Canyon."

"Really.....?"

She asked anxiously, and Melissa gave her a confident nod.

"Of course. And you should believe in him just like those girls..... that this long overdue ending is at hand."

And Melissa said in a manner that was quite certain,

"At the very least Akatsuki -- hasn't given up the fight."

Part 5

Through specific locations in Alayzard it was possible to instantly travel all over the world by means of spatial transfer.

It was done by using the relics the Church of Richard created to spread its teachings from time immemorial the <Shift Gate>.

In the middle of the night Listy passed through the <Shift Gate>, and appeared in the Palace of the Disdiya. Her purpose was to visit Emperor Baram -- to conduct a confidential meeting with him.

As she was being guided by a Royal Knight through the final long corridor Listy took a deep breath.

..... This crucial moment rests with me.

In order to stop Disdiya's military aggression from getting out of hand, Listy must take action alone.

-- Originally, with the war approaching an end there was no need for Baram to accept her request to a private meeting. Sherfied and Disdiya's military alliance for a long time now existed in name only. After all, he had been repeatedly acting on his own authority practically from the start of the war with Sherfied having absolutely no opinions on the matter.

However, Listy succeeded in forcing Baram to accept her proposal to talk -- once the matter of Leon was raised.

Perhaps it was within Baram's calculations that Listy would bring up the matter concerning Leon. Most assuredly he knows of Leon's past regular massacring of Demons, and probably knew in great detail about the tragedy five years ago. And if Sherfied publicly denounced Disdiya for reviving Leon with forbidden magic Baram wouldn't hesitate to make public the truth about the tragedy, and even the atrocities Leon committed.

The cruel truth had enough power to cause Sherfied to collapse internally, while Disdiya would only suffer minor damage. Leon's condition was only because of the power of the forbidden spell. Once they cancel the spell he would return to being nothing but a corpse in sense getting rid of all the evidence. If that happened, Sherfied will be accused of making baseless slander, and instead give Disdiya an excuse to attack them. Listy had no way to work around all that -- that was all true until now.

-- A little while ago the situation picked up. The whispers of the new Demon King having died from his wounds were put to rest when Akatsuki unexpectedly appeared at Gorudono Grand Canyon. As Listy speculated, Akatsuki was live.

And the only one who could contend against him from Disdiya was Leon. In other words Disdiya could no longer afford to remove the spell binding Leon. Since it was now impossible to destroy the evidence, Sherfied's allegations could not be denied.

As far things were concerned for Sherfied or Disdiya the risks were the same. Once both sides exposed each others old wounds, it will come to a mutual destruction end.

..... However, that was still good.

Precisely because this situation could lead to each others ruin, it was possible to tell the level of resolution of the other party. There was no hesitation at any cost -- to achieve her objective in mind. And,

"-- We're here."

The Royal Knight led Listy down the corridor before stopping in front of the door. Soon after turned around,

"Please enter -- Lord Baram is waiting inside."

"..... Thank you."

After she expressed her gratitude to the Royal Knight, Listy took a deep breath, then pushed open the door and went inside.

She was greeted by a room filled with silence. This was the first time she had entered the Emperor of Disdiya's office. It was more simple and plain than she could of imagined causing her to be mildly surprised.

However, Listy quickly changed her thinking, because she found Baram sitting at his desk near the back of the room sending a stern look her way.

"First let me thank you for setting aside your valuable time to meet with me -- Your Majesty Baram."

"Since time is precious let's not waste it on unnecessary formalities."

Baram replied and,

"I do ask that you get right to your business -- it shouldn't be hard to imagine."

"Well then, right to it --"

After she said so, Listy moved away from the doorway closer to his desk to face him.

"I am here to get Your Majesty to agree to a cease fire with Galivain, and to sign a peace treaty. Although it is presumptuous of me, I ask that Sherfied assume the role of arbitrator."

"Hmph..... My, Disdiya's victory is close at hand. What kind of benefit is there for us in a cease-fire and a peace treaty?"

"What benefit is there? I think Your Majesty already knows --"

Listy narrowed her eyes,

"If Disdiya is willing to accept the ceasefire and peace treaty, then regarding use of forbidden magic to revive Leon Esuperio..... my country will keep silent on the matter."

"....."

Baram silently thought it over, while Listy went to press him for an answer.

"Whatever the reason may be, the fact is your country ignored the resolution made at the peace negotiations by attacking Galivain. The invasion of the wandering forest, better the despicable conduct you used to lure the former Demon King's daughter into a trap has in all likelihood already negatively affected any soldier who was familiar with the situation.

Are you not uneasy that will spread? Even if you truly win the war, when these series of events get out it will be difficult to avoid criticism from home and abroad....."

Moreover, with the war drawing to a close his situation was not superior as Baram said. Disdiya may not be able to win. That was because -- Akatsuki was still alive.

"If the truth gets out at this critical moment..... the morale of the soldiers on the front line would be completely crushed. Leon's resurrection is obviously inhumane and ethically unforgivable. When your sense of justice loses its legitimacy, no matter how noble your army is it will be reduced to a mob."

Please Your Majesty reconsider,

"It is not too late. Please accept this cease fire."

Part 6

It was hard to grasp the flow in time in such an environment.

Isolated from the outside world, and enclosed in a quiet dungeon cell.

Those were the conditions Miu was enduring during her captivity.

..... What time is it now.....?

After Miranda left the solitary cell she felt a considerable amount of time had passed. Her public execution was scheduled for sunrise. Considering when she left Forestnium there was already a touch of the marble white color of the night sky on the horizon. In other words Miu's time was running out.

However, Ousawa Miu had no regrets. The thought of dying was certainly scary, but there were things worth sacrificing her life for -- at least she definitely thought so.

-- When Phil Burnett attempted to take Miu as a tool to completely destroy the Demons.

If at that time it had gone his way it would of caused a devastating tragedy. After all, the Demon King's daughter was quite a valuable hostage. But now it was different, Galivain had chosen a new Demon King -- Akatsuki. Miu had already conveyed her real intentions to the young people of village. Even if she were to unfortunately lose her life, they were willing to work alongside him.

So for that reason Miu was able to run the risk of being taken hostage when she arrived at the meeting place.

But -- Miu thought that didn't mean she had given up. The reason why she let herself become a Disdiya hostage was because there was no other way to buy more time.

Ousawa Miu knows her life was very important, because she was living proof that her father, Galious continued to live on. For father, and also for herself she couldn't afford to die here.

..... I will never forget what you told me.....

A certain youth holding a place in her heart came to mind. The place where she felt she belonged -- recalling how Akatsuki took the trouble to tell her so. Recalling how he took the trouble to teach her to never give up until the bitter end. So Ousawa Miu won't give up anymore.

She must find a way to survive, and help those that lent a hand to her -- together with Akatsuki.

So Miu started to look around and confirmed the situation she was in.

..... The biggest problem was the anti-magic barrier.....

The place she was being held was meant to hold criminals. Naturally measures were taken to counter magic. Although Miu only saw two guards there must be other guards stationed throughout the dungeon. And she was chained to the wall, it was nearly impossible to escape on her own.

..... However, there was still a chance.....

Miu was supposed to be executed in front of a crowd the people in Disdiya. When the time comes they will have to transport her from the dungeon. Of course, they know that will be her only opportunity to escape, and were sure to take the utmost precautions when escorting her to her sentence.

But that was her only chance, Miu had no more choices.

When the moment comes she can only try and escape with all her power -- with her life at stake.

It was when Miu firmly swore that in her mind the door to her cell suddenly opened.

And the person who entered was knight in Golden Armor -- Leon.

"Why are you here?..... There should be a little more time before sunrise."

Seeing her perplexed face made Leon smile.

"I am aware of that. I just wanted to check how the dungeonier was doing..... can I trouble you two to step out for a little?"

Alongside the gentle voice was a certain pressure.

The two soldiers standing guard looked at each other, and then reluctantly left the cell.

Waiting until the cell door completely closed --

"At sunrise at your public execution -- I will be the one to chop off your head."

After saying so, Leon slowly walked closer to Miu.

Miu silently glared, but Leon floated a calm smile,

"The look in your eyes tells me you have no intention to die here....."

Leon was now standing right in front of Miu,

"However from now on, I will always be at your side. I advise you to give up on the idea of managing an escape."

".....!"

She knew they would take steps, but she never anticipated it this early or with such thoroughness. Mortified, Miu bite her lower lip, however Leon had mixed emotions and,

"Very soon this longstanding war waged within Alayzard will be marked by a period. It is unfortunate that Galious is not in this world anymore -- no matter, there is a new Demon King. After I kill you, and defeat Akatsuki for good. My war will also finally be over."

Miu listened as Leon spoke with such conviction. Kaidou had said he wasn't so sure that Leon was being manipulated. It seems it was his own willpower to try and kill Akatsuki and myself, and at the same time bring destruction to the Demons. At that time five years ago and now it was the same -- madness.

Even more so now, there was no way Miu could back down.

"It's still too early..... we haven't lost yet."

Miu squeezed out her voice as she spoke.

"Your still holding such unrealistic expectations for Akatsuki? You know, right now we in the dungeon underneath the palace of Disdiyan empire, while Akatsuki is now..... at Gorudono Grand Canyon."

Upon hearing those words, Miu couldn't help but widen her eyes in surprise. It was the long overdue moment she was wishing for. Her face immediately showed the relief she had from the bottom of heart and,

"Thankfully..... he finally woke up."

"To be honest, even I was very surprised that he survived that injury but..... he just regained consciousness, and has been delayed several steps."

And Leon laughed,

"To get to where you are by sunrise he has to in one breath defeat the forces left at Gorudono, the garrisons along the border, and the knights at the Imperial Palace. It is almost an impossible task."

And.....

"Even if Akatsuki makes it to your jail cell -- I will kill you early right where you stand."

Just resign yourself to your fate -- was what Leon's words were meant to convey to her, but the look in Miu's eyes remained steadfast and unwavering. Then,

"Those eyes..... I've seen them before somewhere....."

When Leon looked at Miu he suddenly noticed something.

So Ousawa Miu answered his question for him, and reminded him of the past truth.

"Have you forgotten? We've have met once before long ago."

Yes.

"In that place five years ago that day that you died."

Leon couldn't help but stare. His mind was interconnected between the present and past.

"You were..... no way, that child at that time?"

Miu just nodded to affirm Leon's speculation. It was just like that. Leon grabbed a dark elf child, and before her eyes tried to use her once as a way to kill her Father, Galious.

It was not surprising that Leon wouldn't recognize her. Miu's appearance had greatly changed in those five years. In actuality, even Akatsuki was not yet aware of this astonishing fact.

Although her Father, Galious had never mentioned the incident, following the story she heard from Loutier it was a real eye opener for her.

She was sure that was the reason why -- her father did not reveal the truth that day. It was not as simple as Akatsuki killing Leon to save a mere demon child, but the valuable life of his only daughter. Galious didn't reveal the truth in order to give Sherfied one last chance out of their predicament. Perhaps that was his way in repaying the debt he owed Akatsuki.

And also that -- was the real reason he could entrusted her to Akatsuki.

At that time Miu lost consciousness after she was taken hostage by Leon. Therefore up to now, she thought that Leon was beaten by her father. However, she understood that wasn't the case after hearing the truth from Loutier.

At the same time, she finally understood why her father after he returned from Sherfied would tell her those words.

-- If that human really does defeat me, I want you to live with him.

From the beginning "that human" was referring to Akatsuki. Even before Akatsuki had become the "Rogue Hero," Galious had already made his decision.

After Leon heard the whole thing --

"I see..... history really does repeat itself."

Leon's surprised expression gradually turned into a pleasantly surprised smile.

"Certainly the situation is almost the same. You were a hostage, and I was trying to kill the Demon King."

In addition --

"..... And that includes the part where Listy was about to die."

"Wait..... wh-what does that mean?"

For the first time Miu was alarmed, Leon showed a pleasant smile as if enjoying it and,

"Right now, Listy has come to the Imperial Palace to persuade Emperor Baram to consent to a cease-fire. The meeting is just like ours here. It's behind closed doors with no other people around. Even if something unexpected were to happen some excuse could easily be made."

That was why Leon was there talking to her.

"I heard the stories about Akatsuki after I died. That guy can make a one in ten thousand possibility into reality, and may even be able to reverse this situation."

But --

"Last time it is possible for him to kill me, and then save you and Listy..... but this time it won't go so smoothly. I will kill you, while Emperor Baram will be responsible for killing Listy. With two enemies in separate locations it is impossible to beat us at the same time. Even if he really does break into the Palace, he only has the time to save one of you. That guy will have to make a choice between you and Listy."

"To manufacture such a situation, you expressly came all the way to the dungeon.....?"

Her words and expression were filled with anger.

"What's the matter? Do you not believe in Akatsuki?"

Leon laughed and,

"But then again, the possibility of him coming to help you appears to be higher. Since he doesn't know Listy is here or what situation she's in..... It seems she will be on the other side a little earlier than you."

"..... Listy-san will be fine. She is much stronger than me, and would never have an accident."

Miu's tone showed her belief in that like-minded girl.

During the duel with Akatsuki she showed that her strength was the real thing. Therefore, there was no doubt.

"Since she dared to come alone to a hostile environment. That would mean..... there was no possibility of failure."

Part 7

Even with Listy's pressing Baram for a decision he remained silent. Even so, Listy continued to wait. She already said what she wanted to say. Now, all she could do was wait for the other side to answer.

After a little more time.

"-- Towards your proposal from your country, Disdiya replies as follows."

Baram slowly opened before stating his decision and,

"As for continuation of the war -- Disdiya does not accept the cease fire or the peace treaty."

Listy heard what was said, but couldn't help ask in a more serious tone,

"Even if I make the truth public..... you are fine with that?"

"Even if we choose to concede it will not change the fact that Leon Esuperio existed. Under such circumstances if we conclude a peace treaty there is no doubt that Galivain will seize our weakness, and plant the seeds of destruction in the future. It is impossible for Disdiya to accept with these adverse conditions. In other words, the tradeoff is only unilateral coercive. It won't do us any good."

And Baram continued,

"In case the truth really gets announced to the world -- it will leave our side with no way out. Without a retreat route we can do nothing but believe in our justice, and fight to the end. No cease fire or peace treaty will be possible. At that time Disdiya may be on a path to destruction, but at the same time Sherfied and Galivain will also be compromised."

But.....

"If everyone shuts their eyes to the truth, even if it is an open secret the only country to perish will be Galivain. Then, considering both sides isn't the answer clear."

"What makes you think our country will remain silent?"

"That is so, but the matter of Leon Esuperio is a very inconvenient truth for Sherfied. If the secret gets out it could affect the survival of your country. Soon your country will abolish its monarchy, and be reborn as a new nation with the national election. It's your long-cherished wish."

He took a breath,

"-- I personally do not think you have the courage crush your wish or the resolve to destroy your country."

"....."

When Baram's statement which was closer to a threat reached her ears, Listy was immediately at a loss for words. Before long,

"Certainly..... I cannot sacrifice Sherfied."

Listy said, nevertheless she was unwilling to give up,

"Please let me hear it one more last time. The cease-fire and the peace --"

"Impossible -- Disdiya will never take that path."

"..... It looks that way."

So she said then the next moment -- Listy took out the magic wand hidden behind her back.

And turned the tip of the wand towards Baram.

"..... What is the meaning of this?"

Baram crinkled his eyebrows.

"Since it is hopeless to convince you verbally, there is no choice but..... to resort to force."

Listy said, she felt it was better to make the first move. Because,

"Even if I insisted on making the secret public Your Majesty probably had planned on killing me, no?"

"Oho..... your going to kill me?"

"No. I have no intentions of killing Your Majesty. I simply want you to disappear with me for a little while. In your absence Disdiya will have to tentatively pass the title of Emperor over to your sole heir Alphonse-dono."

-- Listy already had her spy in Disdiya make contact with Alphonse to gain his consent.

"Alphonse-dono was in favor of the cease-fire and the peace treaty that I proposed..... he felt it was the only way for Disdiya not to walk on the road to ruin."

"I see..... you anticipated all this from the beginning."

And Baram snorted,

"Although the meeting was kept in strictest confidence there were still a small number of witnesses. Like the knight who guided you here. The Queen of country sneaking into another country's palace in the dead of night outraged enough to kill their Emperor -- this is quite a serious diplomatic incident, even offering your life may not be enough to apologize. Do you have the heart to pull all of Sherfied into your selfish sense of justice?"

Then Listy laughed -- and with an extremely confident smile,

"There is nothing to worry over. The Kingdom of Sherfied doesn't have to take any responsibility whatsoever."

The reason was very simple.

"Because..... the country doesn't exist anymore."

Before coming here Listy convened an emergency meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The topic at hand was her plan of attack -- and Listy's revocation of the throne.

She explained how she would abduct Empire Baram allowing for Alphonse and Galivain to sign a peace treaty. Naturally Listy's proposal was opposed by all the ministers. Some suggested that Listy carry out her plan while remaining Queen making it an official decision of Sherfied. She was grateful for their goodwill, but she flagrantly rejected that proposal. Sacrificing herself alone was enough, she couldn't drag the Kingdom of Sherfied down with her.

-- So now Listy wasn't the Queen, rather an ordinary girl.

"In order to realize a cease-fire and peace treaty, even at the expense Sherfied interests the truth should also be made public -- to bring an end to the abuse of power by Royalty I expressed my wish for an legislative assembly. I also believe you should take steps towards converting to a democracy, and dismiss the authority of the King."

"What utter foolishness..... to even think such nonsense."

Baram stood up from his chair and,

"Even if you are the former Queen of Sherfied you must also shoulder part of the responsibility. The new King should --"

"I am sorry. My removal was just decided a little while ago. The country of Sherfied at present is in a state of confusion with its leaders. I ask Your Majesty to please wait -- umm, several months until the national elections are over."

And Listy with an composed air,

"And the throne won't be restored to me. As a traitor to my country I will be deprived the position of Queen. I believe very soon, Sherfied will be sending an official letter explaining this matter, as well as seeking your assistance in apprehending the fugitive, the former Queen. There might also be a clause stating something like in no way are they shielding the former Queen from punishment. And if found in your country's borders, Disdiya is free to punish me by the laws of your country."

That was of course just lip service, but it was within reason.

Covering up the truth which what looks like reason -- was Emperor Baram's modus operandi.

"Now do you understand? I have had nothing to do with Sherfied. If Sherfied must take responsibility for this matter it will be minimal. After all, I just lost my throne -- in my deranged state I snuck into this place in order to realize my self-righteous ideals. How is that, does it explain my audacious behavior in trying to kidnap Your Majesty?"

Listy smiled.

"Your Majesty was right. I don't have the courage to involve Sherfied --"

Listy's smile instantly disappeared, replaced by a look of righteousness to clearly declare,

"Do not underestimate me -- if its about my crown and my life I have the resolve."

Part 8

Hearing how Miu believed in Listy, Leon silently closed his eyes.

"In that case --" he started by saying,

"If you believe Listy won't die here. That means I have no choice but to take your life."

After saying so, Leon's right hand started to release some kind of black smoke.

The waves of dark color circulating absolutely horrified Miu.

"This is the ability I received after being resurrected. The power to manipulate "Death." With this I can use any dead body to raid Forestnium with me. Just like the dead soldiers who attacked you in the forest."

"Dead soldiers..... So, because of that.....!"

Miu realized the reason why Forestnium was able to be attacked that started the war.

The concept barrier was intended to guard against an enemy invasion, but it was limited to the living. Therefore, the resurrected Leon and the dead soldiers he controlled were able to pass through the barrier. And why the barrier that Urumu offered his life to create was to protect the village from malicious presences. All to stop Leon from attacking Forestnium.

So then those soldiers before in the forest really were the monitoring force of Sherfied. Then, Leon while laughing,

"If I use a living person -- they become a living corpse. They look exactly the same exactly, and keep their own consciousness, but as long as I wish it they will turn into a real corpse."

"Then give it a try.....! Once I'm dead there will be nothing holding everyone back from fighting you."

"You still don't understand. You will be the same as you were alive, and also have your own consciousness. Akatsuki won't simply see it as you're already dead. Disdiya will not accept a cease-fire and peace treaty, and holding you hostage won't be necessary. As long as the public thinks you are alive at your execution it is fine. Exactly what is dead or alive, at this point."

Leon smiled and,

"Now I can kill you here, and at sunrise I can chop off your head in front of everyone..... I get to kill the Demon King's daughter twice. Galious killed my father and sister snatching away two lives. In a way it is the same number of lives. And I'm looking forward to..... if Akatsuki can come and save you before your scheduled execution time, but to find out your already dead. I want to know what kind of face he will make."

"Let me end this here..... he will absolutely take revenge for me!"

"Is it? After I'm defeated all the living corpses I made will inevitably turn into a life less corpse. Killing me would be the same as killing you. Do you think the Akatsuki has it within himself to do that?"

Miu didn't know how to answer Leon's question. She didn't want to show any weakness in front of Leon, but deep down she wanted Akatsuki to be unable to do it as proof of his feelings for her. But of course, she could never say that to Leon.

Unable to respond Miu could only bite her lower lip. Then,

"Even you are hesitating. There's no need to question what Akatsuki would do. When I fought him originally at Gorudono Grand Canyon he was already confused as what to do. This time that hesitation will bring about his death."

And Leon's tone was frivolous, as if sneering at Miu,

"Have a little peace of mind..... death is very peaceful."

After he said so, his right hand covered with the aura of death slowly moved towards her neck.

"Ku.....u.....u.....!"

In an attempt to escape somehow, Miu desperately struggled. But both her hands were chained to the wall behind her. There was no way to escape. And finally,

"-- As far as that goes from a little while ago, do you still believe Listy will win..... and that she is really safe?"

"Wh-what do you mean.....?"

"Since Listy came prepared -- Do you think Emperor Baram wouldn't do the same?"

Miu had suspiciously asked, while Leon informed her,

"It is regrettable -- but also around this time he should be disposing of Listy."

Part 9

Listy El Da Sherfied eyes slightly widened.

She just played her final trump card, and yet Baram composure wasn't disturbed one bit.

"It's a fairly perfect plan..... but that's only if you can capture me."

That wasn't a foregone conclusion.

"No matter how fast you can chant your magic, it's not faster than my sword."

Baram referred to the sword at his waist.

In the current situation rather than Listy -- he had the upper hand.

But.....

"-- If its just that, there's no need to worry."

And Listy went on to explain,

"The magic chant was already completed before I walked into this castle. I have canceled the magic circle so there is no need to say anything."

Listy hadn't neglected to come prepared. The situation was developing as she predicted. Her magic was in a stand by state in case something unexpected happened so she could activate it at any time.

"Your Majesty is the emperor of the military nation of Disdiya and your skill with the sword is outstanding. Although I heard that..... Do you want to give it a try? Which is really faster my magic or your sword."

After she said that, the atmosphere in the room became still as death.

-- And the next second.

Emperor Baram grabbed the handle of his sword at the exact same time Listy activated her magic.

Listy created a lightning strike in the system of wind magic, as long as it hit Baram, his whole body would be paralyzed -- But,

"--!? Kyaa ~aa ~aaa!"

Her magic was invoke momentary, but it was Listy who the fell to ground screaming.

Listy awkwardly rolled to the side to conceal the horror in her heart.

..... Could it be..... an anti-magic barrier.....?

The possibility of defense measures in the Emperor's office came as no surprise to Listy. She even considered a sudden surprise attack. So she had set up an invisible barrier of her own protecting her. Of course, she took into account the possibility of an anti-magic barrier. However, the moment she passed through the barrier to enter the office her barrier and lightning magic should have been canceled out by Baram's anti-magic barrier. Precisely because that was not the case, she felt secure she could use magic.

"..... Your too imprudent."

And then Baram drew the sword out from his waist,

"The anti-magic barrier in this room will only respond to attack magic, and reflects it back to the caster. Anyone -- foolish enough to try and harm the Emperor will be easily caught."

"Gah.....!"

It was a disastrous miscalculation. Listy was struggling to get back up, when Baram came over to kick her from the side. A powerful force hit her body, however there was no pain. When the lightning strike backfired her senses were temporarily paralyzed.

Baram trampled down on Listy's chest as she laid face up on the floor.

"If you were smart you would of used a magic with a wide range that would of take out yourself and me at the same time. Perhaps then there was a chance of success... .. Even if you talk big, in fact you don't have the resolution to die with me."

"..... Ugh.....uh!"

Although physically she felt no pain, after having her lungs compressed it made it difficult to breathe.

Baram looked down at Listy's face distorting in pain.

With an underhand grip on his sword Emperor Baram exposed a cruel smile and,

"Now then -- since you are no longer the Queen, just a traitor. I can kill you without any problems."

Part 10

A life or death crisis had befallen both of them.

The deaths of Miu and Listy were already a foregone conclusion. As they each faced their final moments the same feeling emerged in their hearts.

It was about a certain youth, and how they given all their heart to him.

Even at the end they continued to believe in him.

And the next second -- Miu and Listy were being embraced closely by powerful arms.

The same time that they reached that feeling two loud bangs resounded one after another.

"..... Eh?"

The two girls couldn't help but open their eyes, and stared blankly at each other.

They were at two different places and now were face to face.

And it wasn't the dungeon or Emperor Baram's office, but an entirely different location.

As for the strong arm around their waists, Miu and Listy were sure they knew who's it was.

So they slowly looked up.



What they saw was a young man with a fearless smile on his face standing there holding them at his left and right side -- Ousawa Akatsuki.

"Ha -- I just love this feeling. The moment when you reverse a hopeless situation."

Akatsuki declared triumphantly.

"..... Absurd."

"Exactly..... what is this?"

From the front came a voice that stunned two people. They were Baram then Leon. Akatsuki somehow announced to them, apparently he had something to do with those loud rumbles, but he was too far away. The blank look in their eyes was caused by them being completely unable to swallow what had just happened.

But the confusion Miu and Listy had in Akatsuki's arms was the same.

So to the four, Akatsuki explained the trick behind the successful reversal.

"After the initial peace negotiation I bought something interesting from an antique shop in Erudia."

Just a little something?

"-- A long time ago, there was a magic talisman sold as means to take care of children."

Part 11

"..... Disposable transfer seal?"

Inside the "Wildcat Pavilion" at the farther most table from the door two women were discussing topics revolving around Akatsuki, and what he entrusted Melissa to look for.

To Melissa seated opposite her, Selina Esuperio asked,

"What would Akatsuki do with such a thing?"

"He said he was buying it for insurance. I'm not sure."

Melissa said and,

"They were used as a precaution against children getting lost or in the worst case from being kidnapped. Once a talisman was affixed to a child, if their conscious strongly felt their life was in danger they would automatically be transferred to their parents side. Even though it is placed

on the outside the magic pattern merges with the body without leaving a mark."

"Umm, so now that you mention it. I'm a little impressed, but....."

Selina couldn't recall of ever hearing of them,

"I didn't see any places selling them. If there so useful, then there should be a demand."

"That can't be helped. As a talisman for self-defense..... there is a fatal flaw."

And Melissa replied,

"When the transfer occurs -- anyone near the children will also be sent back. The kidnappers would be sent back with the child to their parents side, resulting in a considerably serious problem. Since then production has stopped. Depending on how they're used the consequences could be disastrous."

And so,

"Nowadays..... except for a very select antique shops that kind of thing should be impossible to find."

Part 12

At the same time -- in Gorudono Grand Canyon.

Ousawa Akatsuki's similar explanation had come to an end.

"That seal..... when exactly did you.....?"

Miu still had some disbelief, however with a big smile Akatsuki answered her question,

"One was when I sucked a mole, and the other was during a kiss. You both were so entranced I secretly placed the seal on."

"Y-you actually did that then.....!"

In his arm, Listy's face turned red as she remembered. Then the next moment,

"Don't talk such nonsense! At the peace negotiations you already knew all of this was going to happen!?"

Not wanting to admit the situation Baram loudly refuted in anger.

"Hey, knock it off. I'm not a fortune teller..... I can't foresee the future."

And Akatsuki with a shrug,

"-- But, it's not like I didn't plan for the worst. God knows, if anyone would target these guys while I wasn't around. And if they did it's not like I would decide to crush any fool that thought to end this war that way. Ah, did I say something like that before?"

At the peace negotiations he declared in front of everyone.

"Although you think you were acting out of free will -- All of this was me leading you along."

Now all the major players have gathered together.

At last everything can be settled.

The final climax was about to kick off.

While holding the two girls in his arms, Akatsuki exposed a pleased smile.

At the same time Ousawa Akatsuki formally declared --

"Okay now -- let us end to this war."

And then -- the final fight to decide the future of Alayzard began.

The people in control of the fate were the new Demon King and the previous Hero. That was Akatsuki and Leon.

Ousawa Akatsuki thought.

This was presently his responsibly to bear because of his past with Leon. If that was the case the future rested on his shoulders.

"-----"

Leon was the first to strike.

He sprinted towards Akatsuki like he was shot out of a cannon, and instantly pulled out the sword hanging from his waist.

Seeing that Akatsuki immediately let go of Miu and Listy in his arms.

"Stand back a little -- I must be the one to deal with him."

After he softly told them Akatsuki took a step forward.

From the AD on his right wrist black particles were being emitted condensing into a black Demon sword. And the next moment,

Giiiiiiiiiiiitsuiin!

A violent ear-piercing noise radiated as the two swords were stopped midair.

Part 13

The sure-fire victory they held in their hands returned to a toss up, however Leon wasn't the least bit anxious.

Leon listened meticulously to the all the fine noises from the metallic crashes in the background as he swung down his sword at high speed.

The melody of metal hitting played without interruption from the two sides strikes.

The eye couldn't take it all in the level of speed as the intense offense and defense of Leon's changed.

..... Is this really the sword of a person who had no power to speak of five years ago?

The fight during the day he also felt the same surprise.

Once he thought calmly, the strength of the present Akatsuki certainly exceeded his own during his lifetime.

But that was not important. If Akatsuki's renkan keikikou can give its user power beyond the normal limits, then his new life himself had long since moved beyond human limits. Originally, he couldn't use all his power because his body wouldn't have been able to take the burden. But surpassing the limits of one's body didn't come without a price. The Leon of now was unable to use the elements of magic. The reason was simple, the dead cannot borrow the power of spirits. However Akatsuki was the same since he had no magical abilities. It seems that Akatsuki's transcending the limits of a human beings put him in a category a step across from humans comparatively to his own --

..... This is my win Akatsuki.

Once a person's condition gets too bad death was an absolute. When that occurs for the living there was no way to overcome their condition making them easy to kill. And now that he had already died once there was no such thing as getting tired.

Leon was unaffected by using power beyond human limits, however for Akatsuki he must contend with the burden and the fight fatigue. For him a living being that was an inescapable fate.

So Leon thought it was a certainly his win in the end.

But

..... Do you intend to defeat me before reaching your limit.....?

While matching his sword with Akatsuki, Leon couldn't help thinking.

The fast and heavy sword strikes of Akatsuki continuously forced him to make instantaneous judgments.

Just like the principle behind Renkan Keikikou to make use of circular flow the sword strikes followed the same pattern.

However, when up against linear attacks, a group of circular movements had a weak point. To string everything together in a series of attacks required a lot of useless motion.

That created a chance Leon was going to exploit. By striking at the small pause between two attacks it will destroy Akatsuki's entire rhythm.

"-- You're a fool if you think this is all I have. Try it, you can't reach me even a little bit!"

In addition to the flurry of his sword, both Akatsuki's legs, knees, and elbows were incorporated into his attacks.

Moreover until then he stayed on the flat plane moving front, back, left, and right. But now he freely spun vertically increasing the variation all at once.

No gaps in his combos could be found.

As he spun for a roundhouse kick his black sword seamlessly came in to behead.

The slanted downward swing from the shoulder capitalized on the rotation from the kick.

The attacks came in towards Leon one after another. If the sword was stopped, his hands and feet would come in to cover.

Strong. Leon secretly applauded in his mind, but still he was able to block one by one Akatsuki's three-dimensional attacks. The only threat was the Demon sword if he could chop off his head. After all, renkan keikikou couldn't disrupt the Ki in his body since he was already dead. So the kicks and punches were only be a physical blow. However with his physical abilities far beyond human limits it wouldn't cause him any harm not even destroy his stance.

In short, most of the attacks against Leon would be in vain. And Leon believed Akatsuki realized that himself.

Yet.....

..... That expression is really an eyesore.....

Leon wasn't mistaken, that was a definite smile that emerged on Akatsuki's face.

Even while knowing his attacks were ineffective, he continued to release another set of invigorated strikes.

"The confusion and hesitation during the day seems to have completely disappeared."

"Ah yeah..... thanks to you."

Akatsuki's words had a harsh ring to them.

But what was said next -- made it look like Leon didn't understand.

"You said say it?..... that you would defeat me."

"..... What?"

Leon subconsciously asked a rhetorical question, he did not forget that Akatsuki once said something like that.

In the fight during the day, Akatsuki uttered those words before the final strike. Then he used renkan keikikou to exceed his limits. There was no hesitation when he played his final trump card.

Akatsuki made every effort to take down Leon -- So that should of been everything.

However, what Akatsuki just said went against what Leon's perception. The way Akatsuki sounded it was enough for him now in his present condition to beat Leon.

Then now, what did all this mean? -- The answer dawned on Leon, and he was furious.

"Akatsuki, you.....!"

And Leon roared,

"You deliberately let me run through your left chest -- just to recreate that scene from five years ago!"

Part 14

To how angry Leon was Akatsuki smiled, he wasn't in the least concerned. And calmly,

"Naturally -- what other reason would there be?"

That was so to speak a type of ceremony to eliminate the deep confusion and hesitation Akatsuki had.

"If I didn't pay back my debt in full from that time, how could I ever put my all into this fight?"

He knew it was unavoidable that he would face Leon as an enemy. It was meaningless to settle things if it didn't start from there. That was the reason Akatsuki used renkan keikikou at the time to push himself beyond his limits. Even with the heavy internal burden it puts on the body when he pushed his Ki to the critical limit it also greatly improved his power to heal external wounds. At that time the real focus was to defend himself not to attack. If not -- when the left side of his chest was pierced Akatsuki's heart would of stopped, bringing about an instant death.

However since his self healing power had been raised to the limit his heart was still able to beat. However the damage caused it slowed down to the point that Akatsuki barely survived.

His only..... miscalculation was that Listy was there to witness the scene.

"I'm sorry if I caused a misunderstanding..... but this way, soon you can have peace of mind."

And Akatsuki said,

"The me standing here now -- is undeniably able to defeat you."

He then held out his left palm towards Leon. Countless balls of light were released towards him. It was a continuous stream of energy bombs. Then Leon coldly grunted,

"Relying on this stuff --"

Leon used the sword in his right hand cut the energy bombs, or if needed brushed them aside with his left. The area was suddenly filled with a chain of explosions without leaving a scratch on him.

Then --

"..... Guh?"

One of Leon's arms intended to send another energy bomb away, instead it knocked him backwards without exploding. It was as if among the countless bombs a heavy iron ball was mixed in.

"Don't think you can push aside all of the energy bombs..... the Ki can also be condensed." (note -- energy = Ki. Energy bombs sounds better then Ki bombs.)

Akatsuki explained with a marginal expression, before he took advantage of the chaos to close the distance. As he went Leon prepared for the strike of

the black demon sword, and knocked it back. However, it didn't matter. Akatsuki kept on attacking without allowing for a moments rest.

Some of the attacks were blocked by Leon, others were dodged, or certain ones were back stepped. Still, Akatsuki thought it was good. Every time he attacked it represented an unloading of his heart.

On behalf of his own growth.

..... My friend, can you see it!

Five years ago all my attacks fell short of reaching you, Leon. However, it was different now.

My sword is different from before, right? Have you ever seen punches and kicks like these?

These earth-shattering combos -- were impossible for me in the past.

Do you understand? All of this is the power I obtained after losing you. I had no other choice but to kill you in order for you to stop. From that abyss of despair this is the power. So please know. You have to understand me.

And see now -- how much stronger I have become.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAaaa--!"

Akatsuki let out a roar, and unleashed a storm of attacks. Leon's conscience was blinded by his hatred of Demons forcing Akatsuki to make the painful choice of killing him.

And now the two were fighting each other as enemies.

Still.....

Leon was a close friend of Akatsuki's. Therefore he must be the one to stop Akatsuki, and defeat Akatsuki.

This time from the front. To see himself if his power -- could reach.

-- Akatsuki abruptly changed his tactics. He abandoned using his knees and legs to attack. Instead he focused on footwork and fine movements.

He took his speed up two gears, maybe even three.

"This!"

While moving at high speed he heard Leon's confused voice.

As he spoke the syllables of that word reached his ears at different locations. Along with the ultra high-speed Akatsuki inter-weaved sudden stops. The extreme drop in speed was to produce afterimages of Akatsuki. Leon's attacks couldn't touch him at all. Against Phil Barnett Akatsuki

simply used this speed to confuse him, but now it was different. He was going to completely combine attack and defense, while he forcibly deprived his opponent of any notion of attacking.

"Well --!"

Leon was backed into a defensive fight. So at once he took advantage of his new physical abilities from being dead, and escaped into the air.

It was a sound decision. Akatsuki's high speed movements and sudden stops required footholds to apply force.

However, in the air he could restore the situation back to equal. But,

"-- Don't even think about it."

Akatsuki's speed surpassed Leon's arriving to the highest point in the air first. His back faced towards the ground before reversing to drive a kick down on Leon. Along with the Gaaakyi sound, Leon was slammed to the ground.

".....?"

Immediately Leon got back to his feet, and looked up at the sky. However Akatsuki was no where in sight.

"What are you looking at? I'm right here."

Akatsuki's voice came from behind Leon. If that was five years ago he would of never been able to mount an attack from behind Leon's back. Leon turned to look --

"Prepare yourself -- this duel is over."

Akatsuki boldly declared the winner, as he went to make his next move.

However, Leon didn't try to move.

"It is so....."

Suddenly, he regained the composure in his voice,

"Certainly, the next move is the end -- for you."

Just when Leon told him so.

"----!?"

Akatsuki was overcome by a rapid dizziness, and fell to one knee.

"What..... when did you.....?"

All his strength seemed to have left his body. His breathing fell into complete disorder, and it wasn't possible to stand back up.

..... Hah..... What could this be.....?

An abnormal change had arisen in Akatsuki's body. It wasn't just shortness of breath his heart beat slowed dramatically. Rather than slowed it was more like couldn't beat.

"Ha! -- Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha haaa."

Leon laughed his head off like he had gone mad.

"That's not good, Akatsuki..... I was resurrected from a forbidden curse. How many times do you think you touched me directly?"

Leon smiled because as he said so, black smoke began to rise out from his whole body.

"The power that resurrected me is equivalent to "death" itself. You didn't notice, but as you touched me your body was slowly being eroded by death."

".....! So that is how it is.....!"

After he said so, Akatsuki clicked his tongue in his mind.

If it was some sort of poison he could use renkan keikikou to purify it in his body, but very concept of "death" was directly eating away Akatsuki's flesh and life. This had nothing to do with his life span. Simply as of now Akatsuki's life force was reduced to almost to zero.

But -- Ousawa Akatsuki wasn't afraid of his immediate crisis, after all, the outcome remained to be seen. If he could offer up a final attack he will be able to end the duel.

Therefore Akatsuki stared straight at his enemy who was arrogantly declaring the end.

His eyes were focused on where he had to reach -- Leon Esuperio. Over there was the goal.

I will make it.

As he thought so, he mustered up his remaining power into his feet to stand up.

-- A scorching pain travel though his body from behind. Akatsuki's legs couldn't help but give way, and this time he helplessly fell to both knees on the ground.

"Ga -- ah.....!?"

The black magic sword fell from his hand, and as soon as it touched the ground disappeared.

Ousawa Akatsuki slowly turned to look. He clearly felt the last bit of strength rapidly leave his body.

And while his vision was fading he confirmed a figure of a person. Akatsuki wasn't trying to be inattentive of his surroundings, however his awareness became a little vague as his life force was waning.

As a result, it was not possible for him to react.

"-- Who said the fate of this war could be decided on a one to one duel?"

Baram Dy Alon Disdiya said as he looked down at Akatsuki.

Under the moonlight the sword in his hand was sparkling. At that moment Akatsuki thought -- he was as good as dead.

"Gah--!?"

A short groan was raised by Emperor Baram as he widened his eyes.

A straight red line was traced from his shoulder to his waist, a large amount of blood spouted.

"N-no, it's not possible..... why....."

He managed to squeeze out his voice, unable to accept what had happened to him.

Slowly Baram's body tumbled to the ground.

And after a brief twitch he no longer moved.

For the reigning Emperor of the mighty military Empire that was his -- unexpected last moment.

Part 15

Akatsuki heard a trembling voice.

"Why did you intervene!"

The one speaking was clearly trying to restrain their overflowing emotions.

And then Akatsuki raised his head. In front of him -- the sword in Leon's hand was being reflected.

"It was the Demon King..... who killed my father and sister. I must to be the one to kill the Demon King."

"..... Leon....."

Ousawa Akatsuki was never aware of what Leon promised. Only that he always went to visit his father and sister's graves to make a vow. He had to personally defeat Galious -- no matter the means, fair or foul.

His dearest wish was once within sight, however Akatsuki robbed him of it at the last minute. So now Leon longed to kill Akatsuki -- the new Demon King with his own hands to fulfill his heart's desire.

And now when his object of hatred was nearly taken away by Baram it was likely Leon reacted.

However -- when Baram died his body began to collapse.

The power of the forbidden spell was bestowing Leon with existence, however after the caster dies he would return to nothingness. The dark aura of the death that was the source of his existence was leaking out from his whole body. Still the tragic Hero still wasn't about to give up. However, his mind had broken completely,

"I'm going to kill the Demon King! And anyone who tries to stop me anyone.....!"

He was incoherently muttering the same thing over again, while taking one step at a time closer to Akatsuki.

"Ku.....!"

The situation was anything but reassuring..... and Akatsuki instinctively made a grim expression.

At that time -- two girls jumped in front of Akatsuki to protect him. It was Miu and Listy.

"I will not let you kill this person -- Absolutely not."

"Please, I'm begging you, Leon..... you need to make peace with it!"

However, their voices couldn't reach Leon. He was already taken prisoner by his hatred.

They were standing in front of Leon -- however for now both of their responses were too tepid.

Mere verbal persuasion wasn't enough to stop Leon.

"Do not..... get in my waaaaaayyyyyyyyyyyyyyy-!"

Together with this roar, Leon raised his sword from some distance apart.

..... This can't get worse!

Upon seeing that Akatsuki's heart immediately sank.

It was an attack out of desperation in which Leon offered all of his own existence.

Akatsuki could tell, since he did the same earlier when he launched a offensive against Leon. All of the deep seated hatred that Leon held were put into this last strike. Miu and Listy had no means to defend themselves against it. And if the three took a direct hit they would be done for.

But --

..... I won't let you have your way!

No matter what happens to himself, Miu and Listy didn't deserve to die here. So Akatsuki summoned up all the strength he had left in his body to protect those two irreplaceable girls.

Everything -- was released.

At the same time the new model of AD also reacted. It materialized the most appropriate weapon for its wearer. And now what was the most appropriate for Akatsuki was -- the second form of his black demon sword Lævateinn.

Then Akatsuki ran out from between Miu and Listy, who were trying to protect him. However Leon was outside the range of the black sword, and he had no time to close the distance.

So Akatsuki lifted up the black magic sword, and wedge it straight down.

Lævateinn pierced the air -- before striking into the earth's surface.

The most powerful shock wave he could muster tore through the ground headed towards Leon.

Part 16

There was a tremendous explosion.

In the northern route of Gorudono Grand Canyon Leon was on the end, which was blown off from one end to the another.

"Nu uhh uhh uhh ah ah ah ah ahhh!"

However, Leon still persisted with his sword in hand after taking that shock wave from Akatsuki. Leon was shaky on his legs, almost about to collapse.

"Not yet... .. It's not over yet.....!"

Leon said so, as he raised his head.

He caught sight of Akatsuki -- approaching before his eyes.

Part 17

Akatsuki started running immediately after sending out the shock wave.

He had decided from the beginning when he defeated Leon it was going to be from the front.

And -- rather than with his sword, he was going to settle it with his own fist.

So Ousawa Akatsuki clenched his right fist, then pivoted on his right foot as hard as he could.

His toe, ankle, knee, hip, shoulder, elbow, and wrist joints all twisted in order. All the muscles between his toe to his fist added to the rotational energy.

And finally inside his body he condensed his Ki with renkan keikikou as it followed the same route to his fist.

"U ōo ōo ōo ōo ōo ōo ōo ōo ōo ōo o ora a a a a a ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah hhh!"

With the roaring sound and all his might he drove his right fist into the left side of Leon's chest.

Part 18

The force of the impact was like a sharp blade that pierced through Leon's chest out through the back.

Whether it was because Akatsuki sent out that attack, or that Leon received it they both stood without moving with there body pose as it was. After some time -- it was Leon who moved first.

He fell forward. He slowly lost all the power he had before.

Akatsuki moved his arm under his shoulder to hold him upright.

"My fist is a lot heavier than before, right?"

Along with a quiet smile Akatsuki said,

"During these past five years..... I have experienced a lot of ups and downs."

When he asked the reason Leon was so strong five years ago and got an answer he was unable to argue against it. Nor could he find the opportunity to speak his own answer.

However, it was possible for him to say it now. The power generated by hatred was certainly formidable. Nevertheless,

"The power of trying to protect something -- is quite considerable. Don't you agree?"

"So you're now..... fighting in order to protect this world."

Leon gave a weak smile. However,

"That's a very nice notion, but I never thought that once."

And Akatsuki slowly closed his eyes,

"What I'm protecting are these women right before your eyes -- it's just my aesthetic not to see them cry."

"Fu... .. HA HA HA... .. I see, that's how it is."

Leon happily laughed, and from the bottom of his heart,

"In that case, then I will watch closely from the other side -- If the reason you turned the entire world against you was unexpectedly to stop a woman's tears. I'd like to see if that naive ideal can continue indefinitely."

And as he finished saying so -- Leon's body suddenly crumpled into grains of sand, and disappeared as the wind spread it along.

Akatsuki tightly clenched his right hand into a fist.

Tightly he held onto some of the remnants left behind by his best friend blowing in the wind.

"No problem, I won't disappoint you -- As long as I'm still me, I will surely keep it up until my last moment."

After he muttered, Akatsuki suddenly turned around.

And slowly started walking on certain footsteps.

Off into the distance to where the two girls -- Miu and Listy were.

Epilogue - Preparations for the Future

Part 1

There was air which was fresh and pure.

All the life inhabiting the forest was being healed wrapped in such an atmosphere.

That had finally returned to the Wandering forest.

In the center of the eternal forest was the village of Forestnium.

And in -- a quiet remote corner stood two gravestones.

One was for the Patriarch Urumu who unfortunately died in the raid by Leon, and the other armor Knights.

And the other grave was to mourn the great Demon King -- Galious.

-- After Galious was defeated by Akatsuki many of the clansman who fought at his side gave up on the war, and moved to Forestnium to live.

Although of human origin, Galious fought for the sake of all Demons until his last breath. His spirit was revered from the bottom of their hearts, because of such they wanted to set up a monument for him when they came here. However the residents of Forestnium hated the war. They chose to take a different path than the pro-war faction that followed Galious, and feared building a grandiose tomb would lead to needless disputes. Thus it was constructed on the outskirts of the village only known to some.

"It's all over."

Squatting before the two gravestones Ousawa Miu quietly said.

She went on to report to the two who were resting peacefully.

The fighting between Humans and Demons had spanned a long time.

And now Alayzard's chain of hatred and strife disputes were finally marked by a period.

-- Five days have passed in the blink of an eye, since the deathmatch between Akatsuki and Leon.

Their one on one duel lowered the curtain on the war between the Galivain and Disdiya. And although there were some unresolved problems the post-war process was advancing comparatively smoothly.

It was because the cease-fire negotiations only had three people participate, Akatsuki, Listy, and Alphonse.

To leave room to manoeuvre a peace treaty Akatsuki never killed a single Disdiya soldier during the war.

Listy fully understood Akatsuki intentions.

And their philosophy coincided with Prince Alphonse's efforts to stop his own country from sinking even deeper.

So under arbitration of Sherfied, Galivain and Disdiya sat down to sign a formal truce.

The matter of annihilation of the surveillance forces which started the war was the first topic. In consideration of fostering friendship between the three countries, and not creating anymore grudges, it was mutually decided it was done by an unknown perpetrator. As for the non-aggression peace treaty it was concluded and signed three days after the end of the match.

The peace that Galivain, Galious and Urumu dreamed of finally arrived.

After the report was completed Miu's eyes stayed fixed on the two gravestones.

Galious chose to go to war against humans, while Urumu refused to fight even at the end.

The two's ideas couldn't run more counter to each other. However, it was Urumu's grandson Kurt at the time who decided to have him buried next to Galious.

He thought even though they took different paths the two believed in the same future.

Ousawa Miu was very thankful for Kurt's thoughtfulness. In the future more people will visit her fathers grave along with Urumu's. She was sure her father wouldn't feel lonely. And on other hand, after his comrades, who have taken refuge in other places, learn of the end of the war they will also comeback to Forestnium.

After this it can begin. In the direction Galious and Urumu had hope for, the rebirth of Galivain.

"..... Nn."

Miu gave a small nod.

And then her head turned slightly to the right and up.

She had came there together with someone else -- Ousawa Akatsuki was standing at her side.

He was staring at Galious and Urumu's graves with a serious expression.

Miu couldn't help but think he also wanted to speak with them, the same as her. Then -- Akatsuki closed his eyes, and silently said a short prayer.

After she saw Akatsuki open his eyes Miu stood up.

"There is still some time..... no need to hurry."

After hearing Akatsuki's voice Miu lightly shook her head.

"It's okay. I have already told them they don't have to worry about Galivain's future."

She had said her goodbyes to both of them. And after the signing ceremony of the peace treaty in Sherfied, Akatsuki and Miu already fulfilled their promise to Selina, and tasted some her home cooking at her restaurant. So there was nothing left to regret as she planned to return to that other world.

The world where Ousawa Akatsuki -- and Ousawa Miu lived.

"..... Are you sure?"

Akatsuki asked again.

Kurt and the other people in the village wanted Miu to stay in Forestnium. Now that all the fighting was at an end Miu would no longer need to be forced into exile to another world.

But, Miu tactfully declined the villagers suggestion.

She did however accept their good intentions behind it.

There was no hesitation, because she had already made up her mind.

"Umm well..... I no longer belong here."

Miu gazed at the youth standing before the eyes.

Ousawa Akatsuki -- she belonged nowhere but with him. She would absolutely not lose sight of that.

So she herself had already decided to live with him.

Then,

"No matter what, I have to return to my own world."

"Huh?"

Akatsuki's sudden statement left Miu to stare blankly. That sort of thing should of been understood by everyone? However, Akatsuki continued, "..... There is still things I have to finish over there."

And so,

"If you are willing to entrust your fate to me -- I'll take you back with me."

"-----"

Miu can't help but opened her eyes wide, because she understood what Akatsuki was saying.

-- That day in front of her dying father those were the words he said to her.

Akatsuki was re-enacting the scene once more at the place her father's soul was resting. She was on the verge of tears. In her heart she was happy -- but also sad.

So Ousawa Miu quietly waited for Akatsuki's last question. Akatsuki stretched out his right hand, and asked whether she was prepared to take his hand.

The answer was obvious -- and had been decided a long time ago.

So to the right hand of Akatsuki's that had been put forth.

"EH --?"

However Miu didn't take his hand.

Akatsuki had already pulled her over, and tightly embraced her. His arm was around her lower back.

It was the evolution of the form since that day.

As if a symbol of their relationship, but also represented a major step forward.

Then Akatsuki said with a strong voice,

"Galious, I'm taking your daughter. She will always -- remain by my side."

As Miu heard those words in Akatsuki's arm her heart involuntarily jumped.

Before when they exchanged oaths it was a mutually compromise, but now it was beyond that. The question and answer relationship was a thing of the past.

Ousawa Miu understood her present self didn't need to say anything.

""

So Miu remained silent, and gently rested her cheek on Akatsuki's chest and closed her eyes. Of her own will she entrusted all of herself to him.

As she looked at her father, Galious's gravestone she definitely felt the place she belonged..... with Akatsuki. Her Father had hoped Miu would find happiness in the future, and she felt she certainly had.

Part 2

A few minutes later --

Akatsuki and Miu headed towards a certain place.

It was the place where they all arrived in Alayzard.

In a corner of the Wandering forest.

A <dimensional hole> was created there when they traveled from his original world to Alayzard.

Normally when a person was summoned to another world to return to their original world it was necessary for them to pass through the <gate of another world>. However, Akatsuki and others this time used a special method to come to Alayzard, so to return naturally meant they must follow the same method.

After walking through the forest for a little while Akatsuki and Miu reached their destination.

Their companions as well as the others who wanted to see them off had been waiting for a long time.

"..... It looks like everyone's here."

Akatsuki looked around to confirm his companions who came with him to Alayzard were there.

Kuzuha was there, but Riruru was refusing to let her go. Kaidou was surrounded by the children of Forestnium.

Chikage and Haruka were standing next the two from Sherfied, Zechs and Loutier. From the looks of it they were talking about something. And understandably -- there wasn't anyone from Disdiya or Aleclasta.

The war had just ended, and even with peace treaty in place the rift between all the countries couldn't be completely removed so soon. In addition, as part of the non-aggression treaty with Galivain, Sherfied,

Disdiya and Aleclasta had agreed humans won't enter the Wandering forest without first obtaining permission. Otherwise it would be a violation of the treaty. Zechs and Loutier were friends with Akatsuki, so naturally had been given special permission to enter the forest.

"Oh..... It's Akatsuki and the Princess!"

Suddenly, one of the children following Kaidou around noticed them. And,

"Hime-sama --!" (note = Princess)

Just like that Miu was surrounded.

"Everyone came to..... thank you."

Miu held the kids in her arms with a big hug.

Some were smiling, while others were crying no matter she gave them all hugs one after another.

Akatsuki gently ruffled the kids hair, as he slowly made his way through the crowd over to Zechs and Loutier.

"Well then..... I guess we'll take our leave."

Haruka and Chikage notice him coming their way, and tactfully backed away.

After Zechs saw Haruka and Chikage backs trail off he turned to face Akatsuki.

"About that matter you asked me about..... somehow it is working out well."

Zechs said so with a calm expression, while Akatsuki's turned serious after listening to him and,

"I see -- That's good if it stays a secret forever."

The matter Akatsuki requested from Zechs was regarding Leon. He wanted to prevent as much as possible Leon's mother Selina from finding out the truth of what occurred. Five years ago, Leon's misfortune was what he invited on himself, but this was someone else's maliciousness that was using him in their plans.

In order to hide the fact, Disdiya used a forbidden spell to revive him, Sherfied and Disdiya have issued gag orders on everyone involved from their two countries. After all, the truth of the tragedy five years ago, and the truth of this matter would likely cast a shadow on the peace Alayzard had just obtained. But still, the door was still open when it comes to people. People by their nature were prone to gossip. So, there was no guarantee rumors weren't going to be spread.

But

"It's probably going to be okay. We have taken the initiative to release some of our own rumors, saying the armor Knight was someone who looked quite similar to Leon to control the information."

Loutier added,

"And Selina had resigned from her position on the People's Council this morning, and she doesn't intend on taking part in the upcoming national elections. It is unlikely she will learn the truth of this matter."

As long as they don't caught in their lies Selina would never learn of the real facts.

The only way -- to uphold this peace was by deceiving the world.

However, Ousawa Akatsuki didn't mind at all. As long as he can stop a woman's tears, it will justify the means.

That was just his aesthetics. If it was necessary lie, Akatsuki wouldn't hesitate to carry it through until the end.

He doesn't expect everyone to live happily ever after, that sort of ideal was nothing more than lip service.

As long as the people of this world can live for today, and embrace hope for tomorrow without anymore tears -- he thought that was true peace.

"-- By the way."

And Akatsuki said,

"Where is your former Queen? I haven't seen her around anywhere."

"She headed into the forest a little while ago alone."

And Zechs pointed to a group of trees behind him.

"After so much trouble she was able to meet with you again, and now has to say goodbye again. Most likely their are all sorts of mixed feelings in her heart..... On top of that, everything with Leon was a large blow to her."

"..... Hmm."

Come to of think of it after the duel ended with Leon, Listy just rushed over with Miu to give me a hug together. Afterwards, everyone was so pressed for time with the cease-fire negotiations that we almost had no conversations.

"-- Akatsuki, please go find her."

Then, Loutier in a quiet voice went on to subtly inform him of the feelings of one girl,

"Listy is surely waiting..... for you."

"..... Ah."

Akatsuki nodded before he began to head off.

"Oya, Akki..... we should be getting back soon!"

Kaidou called out to Akatsuki, and when he looked back at him,

"Even though I'm quite laid back, I can still begin to feel a bit of homesickness!"

The moment he finished saying so -- Kaidou's body began to shine.

It was a sign of a dimension shift. The people nearby started to clamor, but Kaidou smiled wryly,

"Take it easy. I still can't go back home like this..... right, Akki?"

"Ah well -- in theory that's true."

Akatsuki returned a nod.

When they came to Alayzard Miu was used as a intermediary, since her unique characteristic of being a resident of that world would direct them as they crossed through the <dimensional hole> in Akatsuki's room. In order to carry out a dimensional shift of more than one person, he used renkan keikikou to pour everyone's Ki into each other merging them together so to speak as one.

So -- to return the process was the reverse.

A <Dimensional hole> had already existed here. Now all that was needed was as an intermediary that could link them to the former world to make the dimensional shift possible. After that Akatsuki could distribute the Ki into everyone to return with Miu.

But, when they came to this world the only inhabitant was Miu. The other five including Akatsuki carried out the dimensional shift as one person with use of his Renkan Keikikou.

In other words, it was necessary for all five to act as the intermediary to return.

"Kaidou is only one-fifth of the intermediary needed to return. Unless the remaining four people concentrate at the same time, and I merge our Ki's together it is not possible to carry out the dimensional shift."

Akatsuki explained to the three, Chikage, Kuzuha, and Haruka. And,

"Try to imagine our world, for instance what you want to do after you return..... by doing so, is an easy way to create a connection to our world through your consciousness."

"What you want to do after you return....."

Haruka mimed his words before,

"Now that you mention it..... there's the follow-up work after the ranking tournament as well as preparing for the new term. There must be a lot of things to be tidied up after what happened. Strictly speaking, It's not what I want to do, but what I have to do."

"As for us, it was decided yesterday with Miu and Class Rep -- right?"

To what Chikage said with a laugh, Kuzuha gave her a small nod "Nn", and then while looking at Miu,

"We are going to stay the night at Ousawa-san's home."

As soon as she said so their three bodies began to shine. Now the only one left was Akatsuki, but --

"I hate to do this, but..... you will have to wait for me a little."

Akatsuki smiled and quickly walked towards the thicket that was pointed out. Whiling laughing,

"Apparently over there..... some fellow is probably waiting on me."

Part 3

Hidden in a quiet shaded area in the forest Listy was thinking alone.

She was trying to find a way to put her feelings into words.

Akatsuki was again leaving to return to his own world.

But now that she knows the truth about five years ago certain feelings had been born in Listy.

She couldn't help it -- she was in love with Akatsuki.

..... But --

Five years ago, even though she told him that lie thinking of his well being it didn't change the fact she rejected him.

How on earth could her present self face Akatsuki? And at the last moment tell him 'I've always loved you.' It was too hypocritical.

Even so, she didn't want to separate from him.

She could not suppress her feelings.

"It's already..... impossible."

Listy's voice trembled as she spoke out loud to herself.

Thinking how an unspeakable sadness will take over once Akatsuki leaves, and that no one else but him will be able to stop her tears. However,

"-- I think it's going to work out."

The sudden voice caused Listy's body to shutter, and then she looked back unconsciously.

A young man was standing there with a confident smile, Ousawa Akatsuki.

"Wh-what are you doing here?..... Wait, how did you know I was here?"

"There was a little something I left behind. So I couldn't go back just yet."

And

"As for finding where you were hiding for me, of course, is not an issue. There's no way I could lose track of your Ki."

".....!"

Listy couldn't help but blush.

Even though she already knew about Akatsuki's renkan keikikou, she had completely forgotten how capable it was. None the less his words warmed Listy's heart.

The fact that -- he specially came looking for her was an immense comfort. Seeing how she wasn't going to say anything, Akatsuki come out and asked along with a smile,

"So what's already impossible?"

"No, no, nothing.....!"

Listy pretended to be calm, not willing to share her true thoughts.

Even at a time like this she still had to save face, and couldn't help feel somewhat disgusted with herself.

For all that, Listy was just unable to control herself.

And so

"How about you? What is it you forget?"

She sent a sidelong glance at Akatsuki as to confirm his intention.

Then,

"Oh, that's right -- I couldn't afford forget this."

Akatsuki said so with a big smile on his whole face.

The next moment -- his hand took hold of Listy's breast.

"EH.....?"

She failed to understand what had happened all at once, and suddenly froze in place.

Akatsuki's right hand tightly closed down on Listy's left breast.

His five fingers dug in.

Listy reflexively gave Akatsuki a short right hook to his jaw.

"You filthy pervert.....! You do something like that at a time like this!"

Her face was bright red as Listy quickly covered her chest with her left arm.

"No, I just want to see your smile"

Akatsuki was completely unapologetic. So,

"There isn't a girl in the world who would smile after having her breast suddenly attacked!"

Listy El Da Sherfied's scream reverberated in the area.

Then from behind Akatsuki -- from those off in the distance,

"Wait a minute, why is everyone suddenly looking at me!? This terrible joke has gone too far!"

A scream from a familiar voice was raised.

After hearing that, Akatsuki scratched his battered jaw with his fingertips and,

"..... It looks like there really is one."

"Did you not hear.....! She herself denied it!"

At that moment Listy was convinced Miu must be enduring imaginable hardships being near a man like Akatsuki. To be caught between her embarrassment -- and her feelings for him.

It could be said Akatsuki would do whatever it takes to stop our tears.

He would use a sudden kiss, a massage of the breasts, or a grab of the butt.

And towards himself -- he would not hesitate to lie, even if it meant sacrificing himself.

At that moment, a thought suddenly occurred to her. She still hadn't expressed her thanks to him for what really happened five years ago. So, Listy slightly lowered her head,

"Why do you always..... like that do things other people cannot possibly do?"

She asked the question inside her heart. Then,

"I'm not that great. I'm just doing what I want to do."

Akatsuki easily answered, very straightforward,

"It's just being obedient to my feelings, and honest with myself -- unlike you."

"You.....! It is none of your concern!"

Flushed with anger Listy loudly protested.

Akatsuki didn't need to remind her. Listy knows it best herself, how she always refuses to face her absolute true self.

It would be too painful.

..... But, it can't be done... .. There was no way it can be helped.....

Listy was brought up strictly as a member of the royal family under all sorts of rules. That wasn't allowed or this wasn't allowed, in her royal life she wasn't allowed the slightest freedom. Love or even life itself, everything existed in order to meet the expectations of others. Five years ago -- after they liberated the capital with Akatsuki, it was also true. As the only surviving member of the Royal families Listy's obligations were unimaginable. So, after Galious was defeated she was immediately crowned the Queen to fulfill her obligation as the last of the Royalty of Sherfied, and also even that day when Akatsuki was returning to his original world she could only force herself to silently watch him leave.

Her real feelings -- for all her life had to be suppressed.

"I'm sorry, I am such an awkward and strange person."

"No, I didn't mean criticism....."

After he said so, Akatsuki's expression became troubled.

Same as before words contrary to her feelings could not be stopped,

"Are you looking for me to ask you to stay? I'm sorry, but that's not something an awkward woman would say."

While she was saying that in her heart she was screaming. No, that's wrong. It's not at all what I want to say. Even though this is farewell. As expected you look to be having difficulty. I hate this, I don't want to see such a face.

..... What can I do.....?

I very much don't want to to make things difficult, and undoubtedly don't want to be hated.

..... Akatsuki, I beg you.....!

Even though I can't be true to myself, and although until the end I was unable to speak my heartfelt words.

"A person like you!"

-- But still see the real me.

Please notice.

"The faster you return to your world the better!"

Part 4

After Listy finished shouting the forest immediately became silent.

While breathing heavily, Listy could only look down at the ground.

She was too afraid to look up.

Even more now she didn't want to see the what kind of face Akatsuki was making.

Caught up in her rampaging emotions she blurted out those words, and it was too late for Listy to regret. The silence was frightening, and made her feel she was suffocating.

-- And shortly after Akatsuki finally responded.

What did he say? She was overcome with fear, and couldn't help guarding herself and tightly shutting her eyes. However -- because of that Listy didn't heard a word of what he said.

Rather she heard the sound of footsteps stepping on the grass gradually fade away.

"..... Huh?"

Instinctively she looked up, and then opened her eyes.

Akatsuki's back was moving away leaving Listy behind where she stood.

Abandoned -- the thought surfaced in her mind that took all the strength from her whole body. Listy couldn't stop herself from falling to the ground on her knees.

"A....."

She attempted to call out to him, but the words wouldn't come out.

Just before she had told him to hurry off to his own world, so now Listy had no right to detain him.

"....."

In front of the vacant Listy, Akatsuki's shadow disappeared behind the trees. It was the worst possible farewell it could of been.

"Wait..... don't go....."

However, it was in very feeble voice in which nobody could hear. And -- eventually the situation reach a point to where Listy was completely abandoned.

Then shouts of joy were being carried over from the other side of the thicket.

And a resounding high-pitched sound came.

As well as white light from the gaps within the trees was transmitted.

Listy understood what was going on.

Akatsuki was about to return to his own world.

..... Not like this.....!

If I run after him now I might still be in time. However, Listy was nailed in place, motionless. In her head she knew she must go after Akatsuki, but her legs wouldn't move at all. The link between her consciousness and body was completely severed.

"No..... Don't Akatsuki.....!"

As it was Akatsuki was going to leave. However, there was no way for Listy's voice to reach him.

The sound of crossing over worlds was too loud causing her to feel it was too cruel.

It swallowed her shouts. Although she was wishing so strongly, none the less her feeling didn't reach.

-- However, Listy kept shouting.

Without wiping them she let the tears rolled down her cheeks. Listy was doing her utmost to express her heartfelt wishes.

Do not leave me -- do not leave me alone here.

Didn't he tell me once? So long as I call out your name without fail you will come running.

Therefore I'm calling your name. I need your help now. So stay, don't go.
Listy El Da Sherfied thought strongly, and await expectantly for a miracle to occur.

..... It won't come. Its not possible for me.....!

About to be swallowed up in her overflowing thoughts.

Her heart -- was about to be plunged into a pool of stagnant water.

It was at that time --

Listy suddenly appeared in Akatsuki's arm.

Part 5

In the glow of the dimensional shift.

"Huh?"

Nestled in his arm, Akatsuki looked at the dumbstruck Listy.

Sure enough she did cry, as I thought she would. So he decided to enlighten her.

"I had a transfer seal left..... it would of gone to waste, so I had to simply find a way to use up."

At that time -- under the guise of forgetting something he took the opportunity when he touched Listy's breast.

Which all lead to the present situation. The answer was obvious. The thought of separating from Akatsuki to Listy was so painful to the same extent as dying. The best proof -- was the way she was crying now.

So again, there was nothing to worry about. If it was all in order to stop her tears Ousawa Akatsuki was willing to pay any price.

"I'm sorry, Zechs and Lulu..... I taking this guy."

He told the two who came to see them off through the dimension shift.

"I can't leave a woman who is crying like that. It goes against my aesthetics."

Then, some unexpected words were returned from the other side, Zechs and Loutier.

"Hun..... you had that particular quirk from the beginning. Just get lost already."

"Please leave the rest to us. We'll manage to take of Sherfied."

Their words were told along with a smile, and finally Listy was able to understand what was happening.

"Akatsuki..... everyone..... but I..... I....."

Listy looked up at Akatsuki, and hesitantly wanted to say something.

"Don't worry. Even though you didn't say it, you want to come with me."

Ousawa Akatsuki told her there was no need for any more words. Because -
-

"I'll decided to take you, to take your awkward personality, and to accept all of you already."

Those words of Akatsuki's were sufficient to respond to her feelings in Listy's mind.

".....!"

She tightly embraced Akatsuki with tears flowing from her eyes.

No longer awkward -- she just wanted to never part.

So, Akatsuki put some power in his arm around Listy's waist, and strongly drew her close. She didn't put up any resistance. And while being wrapped in the same brightness he magnificently declared,

"Now -- let's all head home."

"Hey..... are you serious Ousawa Akatsuki!?"

Haruka questioned, as the others turned their eyes towards him in surprise.

Only one person -- looked perfectly calm as if it had been expected, Miu.

After she made eye contact with Akatsuki, Miu floated a smile on her face,

"I knew..... after all, there was no way you could leave behind a woman who was crying."

Miu gently nestled up against Akatsuki's side.

"Since that -- wouldn't be the same Ousawa Akatsuki I know."

After hearing her words --

"Haha..... it's just like that."

And Akatsuki with a big grin,

"Well okay -- back to our world."

At the same time he said so everything in their field of vision turned into a bright white.

The brightness was caused by the dimensional shift revolving around Akatsuki and others at his side.

Part 6

And now -- the brightness had disappeared from the wandering forest.

From where Akatsuki and others were standing not a trace of them could be found.

"They're gone....."

And Zechs sighed,

"You also wanted to go with them, right Lulu?"

She turned her line of sight away, and half jokingly,

"That's so, isn't it?..... but I still have a lot of work in this world."

Loutier said with a small smile.

Akatsuki and also Listy had completed what they each had to do. So now it was her turn.

"And --"

Loutier changed the conviction in her heart into a smile, and said while looking up at the empty sky,

"If we truly did to start to shed tears of sadness -- Akatsuki would surly come running back again."

Part 7

"-- Upon restoring peace to the world the Hero returns to his world with the two princesses."

It was said in a joking manner in a place inside the Empire of Aleclasta.

The most beautiful blooming flowers that could be imagined were enclosed in that place, the sky garden of the Church of Richard.

Inside there was a view a God would have while looking down on mother earth.

The Archbishop and the Pope of the Church of Richard were witness to everything, and had been quietly laughing.

"Hehe..... It's almost like a fairy tale."

"Indeed it is..... and they all lived happily ever after."

To Miranda's words Volk chuckled lightly, and also gave generous praise to Akatsuki's feats.

Certainly with this the war between humans and Demons was at an end.

True peace came to Alayzard, and you might say that was good. But,

"Baram-dono..... was really pitiful. Other countries aside, to not even have his own son Alphonse-dono understood his hardships, and his real intentions of the war. As it is, it will remain a misunderstanding."

Paused for a moment.

"When in fact -- he simply did it in consideration of Disdiya's future."

In Alayzard the Empire of Disdiya had the largest military.

Although the mighty military was worthy of pride the reality for the people was quite harsh.

The majority of the country was covered with sand, even their valuable oases and greenery were gradually being swallowed by the desert. That encroaching barren land won't produce any crops.

Residents living in the coastal areas facing the sea can fish for a living, but their catches were decreasing year by year.

In contrast to crops which can be cultivated by a person's hand, fisherman can't increase production with manpower.

Of course, Alphonse held key positions in the country, and would of been aware of the economic side of things. But, since he doesn't want to fight he must attempted to resolve this issue by political power and both foreign and domestic trade.

Baram on the other hand, wished to incorporate Galivain into its territory. That country holds a wealth of natural resources in its forest, which would seem like an utopia so far as Disdiya was concerned. In order to solve their country's economic problems, and also acquire the legitimacy to occupy Galivain, Disdiya had to be the one to defeat Demon King Galious.

Phil Burnett -- was ordered to make the contract with the evil dragon Zahhak for that purpose.

And then holding the dominance at the International Conference Baram could promote Disdiya's status, and strengthen his own authority to get what he needed.

However, the existence of the Rogue Hero dampened the Baram's plans. Akatsuki actions saved Sherfied, and ushered in a new era of peace for Alayzard.

But from a different point of view -- Akatsuki took away the only hope Disdiya had.

-- Therefore Baram this time he had to see things to the end.

To him this war was the last hope -- and also his biggest gamble.

Even if his name were to become smeared as an invader, everything was for sake of Disdiya. Their new Emperor, Alphonse will soon be able to realize this.

And to what extent his father Baram's seemingly crazy actions were in fact in consideration of the country.

"Oh well, the results would of been the same even if he won." said Volk.

If Disdiya had won, Aleclasta would have denounced their invasion.

As they sought territorial expansion, Aleclasta also had something they desired. That was talent. When talented people come together a country's skillsets increase, and those skillsets can be turn into money allowing for that country's finances to become increasingly rich.

Disdiya's current power managed to hold up entirely thanks to the charisma of Baram. A scholar such as Alphonse that doesn't want to fight can't replace Baram as the new Emperor of a military nation. In the future, the country will end up falling into serious political instability. At that time, many people will make the decision to leave their homes in pursuit of a more stable life in another country. Among those refugees will naturally be the mechanical engineers Disdiya prides over.

Such anxiety and despair for the future will hold true towards the upcoming national elections in the newly transformed country of Sherfied, and unfortunately those refugees and Sherfied's own people won't support it.

However, there was Aleclasta, and the teachings of the Church of Richard in which so many people throughout Alayzard put their faith in.

"Let us rescue those poor lost lambs."

The refugees from Disdiya, and the people from Sherfied insecure about the change in their country will be welcomed with open arms in Aleclasta. It

would be the highest form of humanitarian aid, but also sows the feeling of indebtedness to Aleclasta from the two countries. Moreover the Church of Richard will acquire a large amount of new believers, and will also strengthen their influence further. In short, Aleclasta got the biggest gains without any fighting.

"-- Oh, and speaking of misunderstanding....."

Miranda suddenly remembered one thing, and couldn't help reveal a playful smile,

"Pertaining to matter of the resurrection of Leon-kun..... Sherfied seems to think it was all Emperor Baram's doing."

"As if..... never mind. No need for unnecessary complications. Besides the dead cannot tell stories, actually it saves some trouble."

Volk deepened his smile while stroking his beard.

The act of bringing back Leon with the forbidden spell was certainly done by Baram.

However, the one who had stolen Leon's remains was not Baram. Phil Barnett destroyed his tomb simply to vent his anger. At that period of time, Baram simply wished for Miu to be brought back to Alayzard as soon as possible. Phil held an abnormal amount of hatred for the former Hero, so the two had no reason to take away his remains.

Then -- in the end who arranged to hand over the remains to Baram?

After Phil destroyed Leon's tomb of Leon, and in the short time before Sherfied noticed someone did steal the remains.

Having been aware of the whole situation, but still continued to watch carefully, who exactly would obtain the most profit? Nobody knows who -- with the exception of the person himself.

Volk Rem Aleclasta IV smiled pleased with himself,

"Thank you Akatsuki for saving Alayzard."

Now it was just waiting for the right time to announce the truth to world, and how much.

The truth of tragedy in Sherfied that occurred five years ago.

The results of the investigation on the attack on the surveillance forces.

As well as the amazing fact Leon Esuperio took part in this war.

That much alone should be enough to ruin Sherfied and Disdiya.

No matter how much Akatsuki desired, all of it won't be kept hidden.

Even with many lies piled on top of each other to cover up the truth, to the people who know the truth, they can easily break such fragile lies.

Just at that time,

"..... I'm sorry for disturbing you."

And the young female bishop stepped forward with a respectful tone,

"A letter was just received addressed to Volk-sama."

"Oh..... it was specially delivered here?"

Miranda said somewhat surprised.

A mountain of various letters arrive every day for Volk the Pope of the Church of Richard.

Letters from influential people of countries to any such believers that were present in Alayzard seeking nothing more than to enlist help from Volk, or hoping to get a return reply in his own handwriting were endless. Of course, most of them had no value whatsoever in reading. So, the Archbishop Miranda instructed them to sorted based on the sender's identity and status. Miranda then inspects those letters herself that will be handed over to Volk. Letters address to Miranda herself were entrusted to her subordinates to sift through before reaching her then Volk.

This letter however was expressly rushed over because it was addressed to the sky garden which was restricted to only a few people.

"It appears to be a very urgent -- Do you know who the sender was?"

"Yes, its..... Akatsuki-dono."

"Hoo, didn't he already return to his own world?... ... This is certainly interesting."

'Fu' Volked laughed as he took the letter from the female bishop.

"Thank you for your hard work. You may go now."

After his words, the female bishop bowed respectfully before quickly leaving the sky garden.

And then Volk cut the seal with the letter opener given with the letter.

However, inside there wasn't a letter only one card. And,

""

After he read it there was a long silence.

No emotions could be read from Volk's expression.

"..... It seems what's written is no trivial matter."

To Miranda's words Volk slid the card crossed the table looking ashen.
Only two lines were written on the card.

To the Supreme Pontiff, the people turn to, should not be too high handed
with the truth.

The holy doctrines of the Church of Richard -- won't hold up well with truth
of your nephew, I humbly believe.

Miranda can't help but narrow her eyes.

"So..... Akatsuki-kun knew of 'his' true identity....."

"He already returned to his own world..... it can't be a simple bluff."

His usual composed tone was gone, as Volk snorted. That indirect advice
Akatsuki gave after he left Alayzard was certainly intended to curb Aleclasta
from publishing the truth. At the same time, strongly warned Volk that even
if he wasn't in this world he could crush Aleclasta's plans.

"This can be trouble, how are you going..... -- Your Holiness?"

In the middle of Miranda talking Volk stood up, and without hiding the
disgust in his voice,

"Even if the truth is not made public..... the demise of Disdiya is just around
the corner. There is no loss to us."

After making that parting remark, Volk didn't say anything further. The sky
garden was left behind in silence.

Part 8

After Volk completely disappeared the sky garden once again became calm -
-

"Hah -- ahahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

She could no longer contain it, as Miranda Quenty burst into laughter.

It was the best. Sure enough Akatsuki should not be reckoned with. He had
said at the peace negotiations "All of this was under my control" meaning he
would be responsible until the end. Could it be from the outset he sensed
Aleclasta's plans? No, if that was the case then he wouldn't of let us off so

easy before returning to his world. Perhaps, Akatsuki merely believed Aleclasta was pulling the strings behind the scenes.

That said, Miranda never dreamed Akatsuki would play that card.

..... The world can't afford to know of "his" true identity.

The Pope of the Church of Richard, Volk Rem Aleclasta IV, was Alayzard's highest authority, and on official records doesn't have a nephew. To be precise it was erased. That nephew's existence was the biggest stain on the Church of Richard.

The man eloped with a dark Elf, and after the unnatural death of his wife he discarded his human identity.

The person who became the Demon King unexpectedly turned out to be a relative of the current Pope -- which could never be revealed to outsiders.

"..... I wonder where Akatsuki-kun learned of this secret?"

Galious unlikely revealed his identity himself. If any of the Demon tribes had known about him being a close relative of highest authority of the human race it would of been absolutely impossible to gain the Demon's trust, and even become the Demon King. Maybe even Miu doesn't know of this big secret, otherwise she would of run away from her clansmen back when she received such relentless criticism.

The only possibility could be when Akatsuki left for the <boundary of the Gods>.

After the tragedy five years ago, he went in search of power in the world of the Gods, and must have obtained some information.

"It is a pity..... If his "consciousness" was read one more time, then maybe the truth could be understood."

Miranda said so, while looking at her right. Only a few people know of her special ability to read someone's consciousness through touch.

After the tragedy in Sherfied five years ago, and Listy had to abandoned the capital Akatsuki followed her to Aleclasta. Caught between disappointment and frustration he was absent minded when Miranda secretly read his consciousness, and came to know the truth about Leon. At the same time discovered how much he regretted from the bottom of the heart having killed Leon.

-- However, she didn't get any information on Akatsuki's original world. It seemed her ability was limited to only read the thoughts of things associated with Alayzard.

Strictly speaking, the <boundary of the Gods> was a different world apart from Alayzard, and naturally wouldn't be able to read any of his memories from that time. But if she couldn't find the secret from his memories that would mean Akatsuki discovered Galious's true identity in the <boundary of the Gods>.

"Well, that's probably fine..... at least I found something much more interesting."

Miranda said so with a cold smile that would cause person to shiver.

Miranda Quenty recalled when she visited Disdiya's prisoner.

Unconsciousness in the dungeon cell she read Miu's 'consciousness' -- from which obtained some information.

Miu at that time was intently worried about Akatsuki's injury.

As a result Miranda was able to get invaluable information. Akatsuki was unconsciously protecting himself with the absolute barrier of Zahark's, repelling any form of recovery magic from coming near the wound.

Miranda believed it was absolutely impossible to use recovery magic indirectly to heal that type of injury. She was certain the absolute barrier of Zahark's was nullified in that situation, because of interference from a higher dimensional power.

"Listy-san having been transferred back at the same time..... could not be just a coincidence."

There must be some sort of force behind it, otherwise things wouldn't have played out so conveniently. Therefore, Miranda Quenty made the conclusion,

"As I thought -- she is definitely an ultra dimensional being."

Part 9

"Right on cue"

In Akatsuki's world there was a person who exposed the same smile as Miranda.

It was JPN Babel's high school student council president -- Hikami Kyouya, and the person in charge of Japan from COCOON.

The whole picture of Alayzard was in his hands.



It was certain with this. Miu was a special existence.

Although currently things were in unstable state, the incident with Zahark proved everything.

Miu demonstrated the power of an ultra dimensional being when she tried to help Akatsuki.

From then after Akatsuki received divine protection and the benefits of her power.

..... Maybe Akatsuki really can oppose this world.....

"Unfortunately, you don't deserve to possess this power."

Since the key to activating Miu's power lies in Akatsuki -- everything will be alright, because there was nothing easier than exploiting a person's feelings.

Kyouya thought the goddess of fate was finally willing to stand at his side.

"This is not good..... my heart is beating too fast."

It was spring break for JPN Babel, and no one else was in the student council room as Kyouya was muttering to himself.

He was telling himself to calm down.

This was a golden opportunity he absolutely couldn't mess up.

Now was the time to start the preparations. It was necessary to first acquire everything needed for the plan.

COCOON was bound by the "Y plan," Crimson Twilight was erratic, and Akatsuki was in the dark.

I will transcend all of them.

At that moment -- I will have harnessed Miu's power, and ascended to a height that no man can reach. To the domain where only an existence known as a "God" can reach.

"Ousawa-kun, I bet you want to immediately..... settle things with your brother and father."

He disdainfully thought of the stepping stone in his way of becoming a God. Then Hikami Kyouya laughed,

"But before that, I ask you to dance with me. Our bet will be this world -- as well as her fate."

Afterword

(placeholder)

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